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"YOUNG people ſhould be early taught to diſtinguiſh the ſtops, commas, accents, and other gramatical marks, in which the correctneſs of writing conſiſts; and it would be proper to begin with explaining to them their nature and uſe *."

* ROLLIN on the Belles Letters, b. i. c. 1.

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VOLUME XXVI NUMBER ONE SPRING 1991

The Punctator's World: A Discursion

BY GWEN G. ROBINSON

Part Six

Era of Resolution: 1750 to 1800

This, the sixth part of a historical survey of the career of punctuation, attempts to describe a few vibrant decades when the mutual influence of punctuation and language brought to light many new ideas. After the publication of Ephraim Chambers' encyclopaedia and Samuel Johnson's dictionary, a prevailing passion for 'truth' put to rout the age-old, commonplace linguistic theories. A tremendous energy came to be applied towards resolving not only the exalted mysteries of the universe and the human mind, but also more homely problems—how to set up a power-driven loom, or breed a Hampshire pig, or even, how properly to insert into text a mark as simple as a comma.

By 1750 the British were no longer showing an enthusiasm for the establishment of a national academy to control the vagaries of their language. The drive towards the perfecting of English, however, was not abandoned. The effort simply shifted from forestalling aberrations that did not as yet exist, to emending those that did—thus, cure, not prevention. In his *Plan for a Dictionary of the English Language* (1747), Dr. Samuel Johnson followed the direction recommended by Boileau in his distinguished proposal to the French Academicians: "that they should review all their polite writers, and correct such impurities as might be found in them, that their authority might not contribute, at any distant time, to the depravation of the language".[1] In 1755, and still unwavering, Johnson wrote in the preface

1. Samuel Johnson, *The Plan of a Dictionary of the English Language* (London: J. and P. Knapton, T. Longman and T. Shewell, C. Hitch, A. Millar, and R. Dodsley, 1747), 5 and 29–30. Johnson recognized that the Academicians of France had endured some notable indecision. Rejecting terms of science in their

to his *Dictionary* that the expectation of success in establishing an English Academy was contrary both to reason and experience. As substitute, he advanced a policy of non-interference for "the liberty-loving Britons" and invited his public to "promulgate the decrees of custom".[2]

Under this canopy of enlarging broadmindedness, eighteenth-century Britain indulged its compulsion for the laying down of rules. 'Proper grammar', being an indefinable discipline as well as a necessary one for social advancement, gave space to the exercise of strong opinion. The cultivated gentleman-grammarian could now complacently preside over his admirers—inhaling contentment; exhaling condescension. He saw himself as a sort of father-policeman-judge-and-savior, whose duty it was to protest what was abhorrent in everybody else's language in order to rectify national behavior, for it was the opinion of the day that 'good speech' made an effective antidote to bad morals. A virtuous populace required its language to be purged of dialect, provincial idiom, idiosyncratic spellings, and eccentric verbal formations. Thus cleansed and shriven, it could better serve the accepted 'propriety'. Outmoded entirely now was the reverence for rhetorical ploys, for mystical rhythms and the intuitive confluence of intended and understood meaning. The attitudes that fed this change informed most school grammars published after 1750, for at least a century.

Grammarians found it quite gratifying to bestow wisdom upon ordinary folk, the artisans and workers, the children of shopkeepers and clerks, for whom schoolmasters could not be afforded. These deferential aspirants made up a discipleship whose grammatical improvements infused pedagogues with evangelical ecstacy. Since lit-

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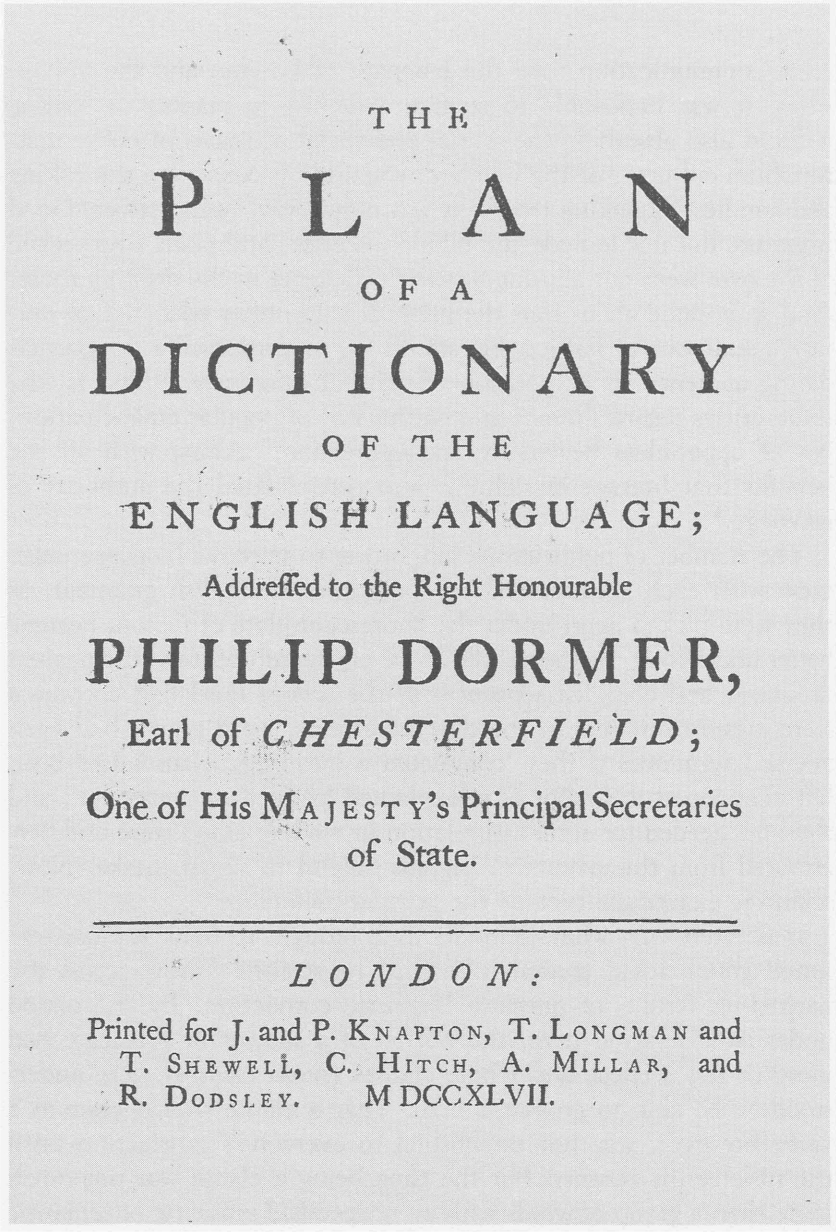
first essay, they afterwards found it necessary to relax the rigor of their determination. As for spelling the words in the manner that they spoke them (cf. pp. 9–10), that controversy in France had led to unsteadiness of result, for do what you may, people tend to adhere to custom. Generally, then, the overriding British opinion was that neither the French nor the Italian academies had measured up to expectations, for in the end neither language had proved to be containable.

2. Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755), Preface. Interestingly, the matter of non-interference has recently come up again in France, where the Académie after much change of mind decided that both the old and the new ways of spelling certain words would be acceptable for the time being, the winner (selected by public acceptance over time) to be officially adopted at a later date.


THE

PLAN

OF A

DICTIONARY

OF THE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE;

Addreſſed to the Right Honourable

PHILIP DORMER,

Earl of *CHESTERFIELD*;

One of His MAJESTY's Principal Secretaries of State.

LONDON:

Printed for J. and P. KNAPTON, T. LONGMAN and T. SHEWELL, C. HITCH, A. MILLAR, and R. DODSLEY. MDCCXLVII.

Title page from Dr. Samuel Johnson's *The Plan of a Dictionary,* second issue of the first quarto edition. This is the so-called "Non-Chesterfield" variant in which the words "To the Right Honourable Philip Dormer, Earl of Chesterfield . . ." are omitted before "My Lord" on page 1. In this issue, the whole of sheet A is from a different setting of type, and the error on page 34 is uncorrected. Courtesy of the Syracuse University Library.

erate communication used the language of London and the universities, it was impossible to acquire a facility in reading or writing without also absorbing the values and social attitudes of polite metropolitan culture. For the butcher's son and his cousins in the baking and candlestickmaking trades, it was a one-way, uphill street. Good literature did not include the rabble's chatter, and poets who reeked of the byre were not alluring to their colleagues in the drawing room. And so it came about that the printed word either educated an imitative audience to fashionable standards, or confirmed a nonparticipating audience in its position of cultural inferiority. "That is why some critics regard literacy as a means not of popular emancipation, but of upper-class hegemony and oppression." Along with all the benefits that literacy brought, it also consolidated the authority of privilege.[3]

The number of publications purporting to improve language usage grew with each decade, and the principles of English grammar, as they were picked apart under the fluorescent glare of reason, became better understood. By the middle of the eighteenth century, the analysis of simple and complex sentences at the school level had become a stereotyped exercise.[4] In the dim yesteryears, word groups had been deemed sentences if they 'completed a meaning', clauses had been left abandoned to limbos of unexplained 'perfect' or 'imperfect', and rhythms needed for aural assimilation in reading aloud were undifferentiated from the syntactical signals helpful to visual intake. Now, scientific exactitude became the popular preference.

It is interesting what elements were brought to light as close-reasoned grammatical analysis ploughed its straight furrow across the hacked-up terrain of previous linguistic conviction. By the period under consideration here, the notion of a subject or predicate had more or less settled, and whole clauses (noun clauses) were understood to be able to govern a verb. That a clause should contain a verb, however, was not established to everyone's satisfaction until the nineteenth century. For the time being a clause was not much more than a group of words with an unspecified syntactic or semantic unity. Nor was grammatical jargon sufficiently developed to handle

3. Keith Thomas, "The Meaning of Literacy in Early Modern England" in *The Written Word,* ed. Gerd Baumann (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 121.

4. Ian Michael, *The Teaching of English from the Sixteenth Century to 1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1987), 332.

in simple terminology the notion of 'object': it was more likely to appear as "the substantive governed of the verb"; or "the Noun or Pronoun which receives the Force of the Active Verb". The concept of 'agent' (or 'subject', as we know it today) was confused.[5] In general, grammatical explanations were longer, vaguer, more circuitously set forth, and the terms of description were both multifarious and difficult to assimilate.

From the time that printing first brought punctuation under everyman's eye, there had been two declared attitudes about its general importance. A person either became enthralled with the distinctions that could be achieved with it, or viewed it as a sort of cap to the wellspring of imagination, a nuisance to be relegated to one's secretary or corrector so that sublime inspiration might carry on unimpeded. While G. J. Vossius was soberly recommending the addition of the *semiperiodus* to the standard arsenal of stops, John Smith, the printer (see Part Five), was advising against punctating superfluities and 'affectations'.[6] But Alexander Pope outdid them both by commemorating in a satiric couplet the whole tiresome subject.[7]

> Commas and Points they set exactly right,
> And 't were a sin to rob them of their mite.

It is useful to remember that even by the middle of the eighteenth century literacy was by no means total. Furthermore, not all those who could read could write. Learning to write was difficult. It involved the conquest of one or another specific script (and there were many), taught by a special teacher, who naturally charged as much as he could get and whose lessons would have included all the messy business of sharpening quills and mixing the ink.[8] By comparison, learning to read, especially to read printed matter, was a piece of cake, not only cheaper (Auntie can teach you), but cleaner and requiring less effort. Although cultivated gentlemen were fully liter-

5. Ibid., 333. The word "agent" was often used to denote the subject.

6. John Smith, *The Printer's Manual* (London: W. Owen and M. Cooper, 1755), 87. Some "would make an Erratum of a Comma which they fansy to bear the pause of a Semicolon, were the Printer to give way to such pretended accuracies".

7. Alexander Pope, lines 161–62 from the "Prologue" to his *Satires*. See *The Complete Poetical Works of Pope*, ed. Henry W. Boynton (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1931), 178.

8. Thomas, "The Meaning of Literacy", 103.

ate in that they could read and write both Latin and English, the descending orders showed a decreased mastery of these abilities. In the 1740s, for example, out of a group of seventy-four Scots women, only eight could write, though all could read the Bible with ease and fluency.[9]

Commerce, nevertheless, was stimulating great changes. Training to become a scrivener—if you had the chance—or a secretary, or commercial clerk, was more and more viewed as a worthwhile ambition. Writing skills were needed to put together legal documents and to interpret them back again, to take down the dictations of the well-to-do, and to keep track of office business and accounts. With trade so dependent on keeping records, script necessarily standardized to a 'round hand' that was quick to write and simple to read back. Understandably, as more writers came aboard, there was an ever-growing volume of written material, not only commercial, but also domestic—correspondence, diaries, and household accounts. If no paper was handy, the skill might still be practised on the surfaces of desks, walls, and trees. So popular did the activity become and so intense the pleasure of seeing one's personal statement displayed in public, that, in the words of one author, "All who come to [the] boghouse write".[10]

Thus did full literacy come to be truly in reach of the populace and judged to be desirable. Whole armies of language 'experts'—scholars, gentlemen, schoolmasters, clerics—now emerged onto the field of opportunity, all passionate in their beliefs about the written word and each bursting to say his piece. The latter half of the eighteenth century was a period when a great deal was thought and said about grammar, which was discovered at last to be fundamental to the oral rendering of text; about spelling ("Orthoggraphy iz dhe *just Picture* ov Speech"[11]); about handwriting and 'correct' pronunciation. Standardization in all these areas was deemed to contribute to the strength, integrity, and decency of the nation. As for punctuation, strange things were occurring. For a number of decades elocu-

9. Thomas, "The Meaning of Literacy", 100. The disparity in literacy between male and female being frequently enormous, one cannot help wondering what sort of rapport was possible between a highly cultivated husband and his semi-literate wife.

10. Ibid., 112.

11. James Elphinston, *Inglish Orthoggraphy Epittomized* (London, 1790), 1.

tionary currents flowed immiscibly with the strengthening grammatical ones—like the muddy Missouri at the side of the great Mississippi. A few grammarians (like Burrow, see below) wholly favored the aural pointing tradition. But the majority increasingly described the stops in syntactical terms, sometimes even in the very sentences that were propounding breath-pauses. After much grappling with the principles involved, the century came to a close with an established theoretical understanding of the separate needs of ear and eye. From that time on, intellectually responsible philosopher-grammarians acceded to the proposition that logical punctating, aligned to syntactical structure, was the best way to break up written text.[12]

Throughout the era under consideration, it was gradually accepted that there is a difference between the art of silent reading and reading aloud. Under grammatical analysis, the separate skills came to be differentiated and eventually redefined, each in its derivative relationship to natural speech. All three areas—reading aloud, reading in silence, and speech—demand an appropriate meting out of sentence segments. That is the heart of successful language usage, written or spoken. If it is to make sense to us, it must come in pieces, not in a long, undifferentiated effusion. Where, for the eye, it is necessary to denote the boundaries of grammatical pattern, a mark must be made on the page. Oral expression and aural intake, each with its own separate physiological constraints, demand their breaks of silence to delineate meaningful rhythmic motifs. The wants of eye and tongue-ear are duplicate to a large degree, but not entirely, and overlap and equality must be distinguished. Why it is that humans should require language to come in small installments of assimilable word groups is beyond the scope of this essay. But it is clear that they do, and accepting that will be enough for the moment.

The following pages present a chronological selection of grammarians and the treatises they wrote, in so far as they had some bearing on the development of punctuation. Whether they railed at or openly admired Samuel Johnson, they all seemed to gain speed after the publication of his great dictionary. As solutions to the problems of grammar and syntax, good style, consistent spelling, effective oral interpretation, and clarity of meaning bubbled forth, so a canon of

12. Park Honan, "Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century English Punctuation Theory", *English Studies* 41 (1960): 94.

teaching precepts began to take shape, in which punctuation, at first so much disdained, became at last a 'proper' consideration.

PROMINENT GRAMMARIANS OF THE THIRD QUARTER OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

JOHN WARD

John Ward, biographer and antiquarian, produced a work of grammatical importance to the eighteenth century. However, compared to the work of grammarians only a few years down the line, his *Four Essays Upon the English Language* (1758)[13] seems today immensely archaic, both in concept and design. Barely preceding Priestley's more influential publications, the book might better have been delayed to learn from its successors. Ward's interests center on orthography (a major contemporary fascination), division of syllables, the use of articles, and the formation and analogy of English verbs with their Latin counterparts. He lists the verbs, having first forced them into four Latinate conjugations, in page after page of paradigmatic moods and tenses. Thus, from the second conjugation we find: I overcome, I did or had overcome, thou mayest, canst, shouldest, wouldest, couldest, wast, or hast been overcome, we shall or will be overcome, let us overcome and be overcome, would that they might have been overcome, and so on. Though he shows every passion for the analysis of language, this Mr. Ward (there will be another shortly) has scorned to discuss punctuation's role in the upper reaches of clear communication. This attitude should not surprise. We shall encounter it frequently in these early, status-conscious years, when earthbound practicalities are not yet the meat of high-flying philosophy.

JOSEPH PRIESTLEY

In 1761 Joseph Priestley wrote *The Rudiments of English Grammar*, a liberal book for the times, and stimulating even now for the sound reasoning behind the practice it advocates. We are not surprised to learn that Mr. Priestley was a scientist by profession as well as an

13. John Ward, *Four Essays Upon the English Language* (London: Printed for the Author, 1758; reprint, Menston, England: Scolar Press, 1967), passim.

eminent participant in all the philosophical controversies of his day, the well-being and durability of the English tongue being prominent amongst them. With Dr. Johnson, he helped lay to rest the idea of straightjacketing the national language. An academy, argued Priestley, is "unsuitable to the genius of a free *nation*". To assure perfection, a better means is patience, for the "best forms of speech will in time establish themselves by their own superior excellence" and do so more effectively than the "hasty and injudicious manufacturings of a synod".[14] This commodious tenet is the one commonly exercised today. In the not-so-laid-back culture of mid-eighteenth-century England, however, Priestley's voice rings out marvelously.

His *Rudiments*, a slim, so-called 'teaching book', was reprinted at least eight times before 1800. Though it rides ethereally over the specifics of punctuation, it is important to us for its overall commonsense. Here is a man of great influence, a thinker, who invites the world to use words to convey ideas as exactly as possible. "Words are crucial to our mental operations", wrote Priestley, and written words must have an even "greater degree of precision and perspicuity . . . in order to record, extend, and perpetuate, useful knowledge". Mr. Priestley shows a certain impatience with those who fuss and dither over mere literature, when Philosophy and Astronomy can so potently enlarge the human view and inspire sentiments more in keeping with "our station as rational creatures".[15]

He takes us through all the parts of speech. Although he does not include parsing instructions, it seems likely that the dissection of sentences was a favorite personal hobby, for his absorption in the varying weights and shapes of syntactic structures, which are the very stuff of logical punctating, is manifest in all his publications. Every sentence, says Priestley, however "complex or encumbered with superfluous ornaments", may be reducible to essential nouns connected by verbs. A sentence constructed "to cohere in a regular depend[e]nce of one word upon another may stand single in a composition, having a full pause both before and after it, if the nature of the discourse makes it requisite that the sentiment it contains be considered separately and attentively; as in strong passion, or close

14. Joseph Priestley, *The Rudiments of Grammar* (London: R. Griffiths, 1761; reprint, Menston, England: Scolar Press, 1969), vii.
15. Ibid., 45–46, 60–63.

reason".[16] This analysis of what makes a sentence complete goes strikingly beyond what had been set forth in previous popular classroom grammars.

In his *Language and Grammar* (1762), a more philosophical volume comprising general lectures on language, Priestley pursues his vision more expansively. Prose is his topic, for the connection of sentence units in prose is not so intricate as in verse. Poetry, relying on metrical punctuation to delineate its stanza and line shapes, does not demand the natural progression of phrases nor the guiding words of transition—the *thens*, *buts*, and *moreovers*—conventionally present in serious prose. In written discourse, the relationship of words within the syntax of the language is vital to comprehension, "for the sense of a sentence depends as much upon the connection of the words, as the meaning of them separately considered".[17] Indeed, it is the arrangement of integral word groups in accordance with their power to bind or subordinate that conveys meaning in any uninflected language.

Priestley's important contribution to linguistic study was his scientific approach, his confident assumption, so appealing to our ancestors, that there is an order to the madness of language and that a cautious tweezering will disentangle it all. Although he does not even here deal specifically with the matter of points, he very definitely addresses the problems that underlie an elucidating usage of them. Always, the key to the meaning will lie in the relationships along the syntactical track. With the passing of each year, this message to would-be writers grew firmer. Before Priestley, the grammar books seem somehow chaotic, full of passionate cries about spelling, pronunciation, unsurely described parts of speech, and either confusion about or wonderment at the potentials of punctuation. After

16. Priestley, *Rudiments*, 48–49.

17. Joseph Priestley, *A Course of Lectures on the Theory of Language and Universal Grammar* (Warrington, England: W. Eyres, 1762; reprint, Menston, England: Scolar Press, 1970), 254. This expansive and ambitious book, in which English comes off not at all badly, deals with the potentials and failures of all languages. See page 8; and pp. 298–302, where he gives an interesting sketch of the universal language discussed by Dr. Wallis almost a century earlier. Interesting to note in this heyday of logic are the facts that Dr. Wallis was himself a mathematician, Mr. Priestley a student of natural science, and both were concerned to improve and perfect the English language.

him, the thin, tricky path through the thickets and briars of grammar seemed to open up onto green grass.

ROBERT LOWTH

Bishop Robert Lowth fashioned his *Short Introduction to English Grammar* (1762) for the general public. Enthusiastically received, it went through twenty-two editions before 1800 to become the mandatory textbook for instruction in English, as well as the basis of numerous other grammars that followed after. For this *locus classicus* of grammatical counsel, the Bishop gathered all his considerable pastoral and pedagogical know-how to entice his audience to a seemliness both of expression *and* of behavior.

Mindful, no doubt, of the Boileau-Johnson proposal, the Bishop observes in his preface that even the best authors have often been unable to state with propriety and accuracy what they wished. And why? *For the want of grammatical rudiments.* To bear himself out, he appends to each account of his listed parts of speech, samples of error from all the greats that he can muster—and they are legion: Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Swift, and Pope, for a start—all of whom he diagnoses as wanting "a due knowledge of English grammar". To think what the world might have enjoyed if the *Short Introduction* had reached these authors in time! Here is a slap on the wrist for Addison, who had written:[18]

> "My paper is the *Ulysses his* bow, in which every man of wit or learning may try his strength." Addison, Guardian N° 98. [Upon which the Bishop comments as follows:] This is no slip of Mr. Addison's pen: he gives us his opinion upon this point very explicitly in another place [where he says:] "The same single letter [*s*] on many occasions does the office of a whole word, and represents the *his* and *her* of our forefathers." Addison, Spect. N° 135. [The Bishop continues:] The latter instance might have shewn him how groundless this notion is: for it is not easy to conceive, how the letter *s* added to a Feminine Noun should represent the word *her*;

18. Robert Lowth, *A Short Introduction to English Grammar* (London: J. Hughs, 1762; reprint, Menston, England: Scolar Press, 1967), 26–27.

> any more than it should the word *their*, added to a Plural Noun; as, "the *children's* bread." But the direct derivation of this Case from the Saxon Genitive Case is sufficient of itself to decide this matter.

There is no doubt in Lowth's erudite mind about what is right and what is wrong. Given his influence (and his conviction), it is worth our while to look at his nineteen-page chapter on punctuation, in which he sensibly recognizes the inadequacy of a mere four puncts to direct perfectly a linguistic stream. Though the alphabet letters, he says, have a known and determinate power, yet the several pauses that break up the flow of written discourse are very imperfectly expressed by points. But especially interesting (for this is the era of coming to grips with all the incompatible factors of punctuating) is his attempt to yoke together the requisites for visual and aural comprehension of language. His advice for a good result from this historically and physiologically complicated pairing is speciously simple: One should speak in accordance with the comprehended grammatical structures, and point as one speaks. That way, speaking and writing (ear-tongue and eye) become essentially one. *If* the pronunciation is just and exact, you can't go wrong. There you are, a perfect circle.[19]

> Punctuation is the art of marking in writing the several pauses, or rests, between sentences, and the parts of sentences, according to their proper quantity or proportion, as they are expressed in a just and accurate pronunciation.

And what that might be he cannot quite bring himself to say.

> [There is a great variety amongst] the different degrees of connexion between the several parts of sentences, and the different pauses in a just pronunciation, which express those degrees of connexion according to their proper value.

The mystery seems to lie in the connections of structures, for the points are designed "to express the Pauses, which [in turn] depend

19. Lowth, "Short Introduction", 154–55.

on the . . . connexions between Sentences, and between their principal constructive parts". Thus, to know how to point (or how to read), we must know our grammar. We must know how to demark with a comma the imperfect phrase, or adjunct, which contains no assertion and hence does not amount to a proposition or sentence; and how to distinguish the propositions, those major chunks whose requisite subject and verb more or less tally with what modern grammar calls a "clause". All these bits and pieces must be separated and assessed before an appropriate punctuational decision can be made.[20]

Though admitting that the comma, semicolon, colon, and period cannot illuminate all the subtleties of connection, subordination, and governance within a text, Bishop Lowth is content to manage with only this basic cadre. For if there were more (and some scholars were rumbling to conscript more), then the doctrine of them, he argued, would perplex and embarrass, rather than assist the reader. Better, therefore, to plump for simplicity. And with that settled, we plunge. A sentence is nothing more than "an assemblage of words, expressed in proper form, and ranged in proper order, and concurring to make a complete sense". Set into this apparatus, the colon is "a chief constructive part, or greater division, of a Sentence", of which the semicolon is itself a subdivision. The smaller segments are left to commas.[21]

But it was still a world of listeners gathered around to enjoy a text transformed into sound by a performing reader. Aural considerations being still necessary to the full realization of literature, a treatise purporting to deal comprehensively with grammatical rules could not sidestep rhetorical expectation. And so, we find, yet again, the familiar old drumbeat: A period's pause is equal to two for a colon; a colon's pause is equal to two for a semicolon; and a semicolon's is double the value of the comma. It is the relationship between them, however, that *really* matters, says our Bishop, not the actual time count. "The proportion of the several Points in respect to one another is rather to be regarded, than their supposed precise quantity, or proper office, when taken separately."[22] No need, really, to tap our rulers on the desktop.

20. Ibid., 159–61.

21. Ibid., 95 and 157.

22. Ibid., 158 and 171. With his remaining energies, Bishop Lowth attaches to the end of his volume (pp. 173–86) six verses from the New Testament, "A Praxis,

Refinements and examples follow each of the Bishop's definitions, and we wonder how any mere pupil will ever gain the confidence to handle all the variables about which he is here cautioned—the judgment, for example, to determine with true, clerical conviction whether a greater pause than a semicolon might on certain occasions be beneficial to comprehension. Although strains of autocratic assuredness imbue (and in some cases, saturate) the works of so many of the period's grammarians, we are, in the case of Bishop Lowth, quite pleasantly cajoled by reason. This gentleman is in dialogue with us, not bulldozing us around like so much rubble. We are flattered by his generous opinion of our judgment. He does not insist where he cannot justify. (And he is never at a loss to justify.) In a mode of moderation, he sums up the appropriate approach to the handling of points: All things in their due proportion. And how can one argue with that?

WILLIAM WARD

In 1765 William Ward introduced his *Essay on Grammar*, a comprehensive study of the English language, which enjoyed considerable acclaim and was reissued three times, in 1778, 1779, and 1788. This book clarified a number of uncertainties about the differences between clause and complete statement. But perhaps most helpful for an English audience was the author's discussion of the principle of the relative pronoun. Indebted to the Cartesian principles of the French Port Royal grammarians and to Dr. Johnson's *Dictionary*, he more or less answered the nagging questions about the constructions and hierarchies of 'incompleat' segments within sentences—features which so much govern the logical use of puncts. The voice we hear now is typically a very rational one.[23]

> Now the form of a compleat sentence is necessary in language to express truth or falsehood; but is not necessary to

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or Example of Grammatical Resolution", which he then analyzes in twelve additional pages, explaining in the manner, one supposes, of a model student, word by word: "*In* is a Preposition; *the* the Definite Article; *fifteenth*, an Adjective; *year*, a Substantive, or Noun, in the Objective Case governed by the Preposition *in* . . ." and so on, leaving very little to chance.

23. William Ward, *An Essay on Grammar* (London: Robert Horsfield, 1765), 135.

> express either a conception which is merely that of a compleat object of the intellect, or a conception which must be made dependent on some other conception, and united with it, in order to become that of a compleat object of the intellect. [When the conception is to be dependent], some notice must be given of it [such as a "when", a "who", a "where", a "some reason for which" etc.] for with out such notice, the grammatic form in which the words are drawn up would lead the hearer or reader to consider them, as a separate expression, of compleat truth or falsehood.

Like Priestley and Lowth, he accepts the necessity for each whole sentence to contain both a substantive and a verb—either explicit or understood. For the verb must be of a number (singular or plural) and of a person (first, second, third), and those selected numbers and persons demand something to show what they should be—namely, a subject. The verb unit must be completed by its complementary governing substantive subject before it can be applied to any sentential construction. A verb on the loose, unmoored and afloat on the tide, so to speak, is of no value to anyone. Since every speaker of a language knows the words of that language, no information is imparted by the simple announcement of a word out of context. A gesticulatory or verbal context must be built, in which relationships and connections and placements and order carry the weight. It is all complicated, yes, but newcomers to the craft of sentence-making will acquire the necessary confidence by learning the following simple verse.[24]

> In sentences at large used to declare,
> The nominatives before the verbs appear.
> But in question, wish, or a command,
> The nom'natives behind their verbs must stand
> Of ev'ry simple tense; but if complex,
> After the signs we nom'natives annex.
> And suppositions, not by if, receive,
> After the verb or sign, a nom'native.

24. Ibid., 262, and 448–49.

Since Mr. Ward's expressed goal is "to explain the proceeding of the mind in forming the conceptions annexed to words, and in applying these conceptions by the means of words, so as to communicate the perceptions, thoughts, and purposes of one man to another", he does not directly address the stops, except to say that there are four, and that most nations tend to use them in order to separate the sentences and clauses of sentences. It is very surprising, given his interest in exactitude, that he fails to examine the subject beyond its aural aspects. He describes the stops as directing the pauses and breaks in continued speaking and suggests that they often give guidance to tonal qualities. He concludes:[25]

> But if any one has a clear conception of the meaning of what is written, he will easily perceive where the points are to be placed; and if he has observed good speakers or readers he will easily perceive what tones are to be used previous to each point.

Obviously, Mr. Ward himself found reading from text perfectly manageable, and not a topic, as it would soon be, worthy of grandiose analysis. The written line mirrored the spoken closely enough, in his opinion, to allow an intelligent, educated person to intuit, and adjust for, the areas of discrepancy.

It is interesting to notice the public's developing appetite for language dissection with all the ancillary detail. To delight and entice a nonspecialist (though Latin-familiar) audience, Mr. Ward listed in his table of contents the various topics that he had discussed within the text. Amongst the headings under adverbs, for example, we find: negative, redditive, relative, demonstrative, and conjunctive. For conjunctions the offering grows quite large: copulative, disjunctive, discretive, conditional, adversative or concessive, redditive, causal, illative, restrictive, and causal or sentential demonstrative. For verbs, which were his favorites, we do not have room.

Drawing from his own earlier materials, Mr. Ward published (ca. 1766) *A Practical Grammar of the English Language,* in which he explained—more tersely, for the intellectual commoner—the principle of binding words into series of meaningful connections. Since this

25. Ward, *Essay,* 9.

book was designed for teaching in the classroom, and devotedly applied to English all the attributes and distinctions pertaining to highly inflected Latin, where words are related by means of declension and conjugation and not by word order as in English, it is especially telling that he again fails to suggest an answer to the problem that so concerns us: how best to mark off clearly the conceptual unities in a linearly expressed statement. It was still, apparently, a subject too mundane for the true philosopher.

JAMES BUCHANAN

James Buchanan, whose confidence had already been fortified by the happy reception of his anonymously authored *British Grammar* (1762), came forth again in 1767 with *A Regular English Syntax*,[26] an austere octavo that belabors previous literary giants in accordance with the custom of the day. One is not surprised to learn that Mr. Buchanan was a Scots schoolmaster, for his chidings smack of a Caledonian cheerlessness. Authors today should feel rather relieved that they have postdated this disapproving censor. With typical obduracy, he says: "Considering the many grammatical Improprieties to be found in our best Writers, such as Dryden, Swift, Addison, Pope [and by implication, others too numerous to name], a Systematical English Syntax is not beneath the Notice of the Learned themselves".[27] Within the syntax, we are informed, lie all the secrets of meaning. The words of a sentence must fit truly, one to the other, and the sentence itself unfold its parts in an orderly way, so as to yield a full comprehensibility. All of this is sound advice.

For keeping his students lively and alert, he adopts a catechizing format. "What is emphasis?" he asks. "What do you mean by cadence? . . . by a word? . . . by a sentence?" A well-reasoned response follows each peppery question. Sentence, for example, turns out to be "any Thought of the Mind, expressed by two or more

26. James Buchanan, *A Regular English Syntax* (London: J. Wren, 1767). Besides his *British Grammar*, Mr. Buchanan had built other monuments to his industry: in 1753 *The Complete English Scholar;* and in 1757 both *Linguae Britannicae vera pronunciatio; or, A New English Dictionary* (wherein we are unceremoniously told that "Punctuation" is "The method of pointing or making stops in writing" and not a jot more) and *A New Pocketbook for Young Gentlemen and Ladies.*

27. Buchanan, *English Syntax,* vii, ix.

Words joined together in proper Order, and it is either simple or compound". We are told that words have no value unless connected and that the simple sentence must contain a verb and a noun, either explicit or understood. Like his compeers, he is very concerned with "false syntax", an ailment that blights the achievements of the most august writers; and to guard against it, he doles out rules. "*This* Bellows will not blow; . . . *that* Books are well bound", and the like, are examples of false syntax. Even the "scholar is often at a Loss concerning the Use and Order of *this* and *that,* and likewise their Plurals *these* and *those*".[28] It is very hard to be right in all these matters, but Mr. Buchanan assures us that we are safe in his hands. When he is finished with what he has to say, Dryden, Swift, Addison, and all that lot have been thoroughly drubbed.

After some two millennia of authorial autocracy, however, it is rather a treat to see the emergence of so dedicated an effort to extend solid, comprehensible sense to the laboring reader. Mr. Buchanan, in keeping with his era, is concerned that clarity be the goal of all writing. "In the Arrangement of a Period, the first and great Object is Perspicuity, which ought not to be sacrificed to any other Beauty. Ambiguities occasioned by a wrong Arrangement are of two Sorts; one where the Arrangement leads to a wrong Sense; and one where the Sense is left doubtful." He promptly turns on Bolingbroke (and quite rightly), to rebuke him for his meaningless sentence: "Sixtus the Fourth, was, if I mistake not, a great Collector of Books, at least". The "at least" belongs before "of books", which it is intended it should stress. In the matter of wrongly arranging words, we are told, Swift (sadly no longer alive to benefit from Buchanan's insights) was a major culprit.[29]

A Regular English Syntax, being a 'teaching book', includes chapters of exercises, a praxis, *and* some thirteen pages on punctuation, which the author tackles with great resolve.[30] Writing "being the very Image of Speech", he begins, the points have a dual purpose: to prevent obscurity in the sense, and to mark the proper pauses for reading aloud. The correct arrangement of "Words and Members of a Period contribute to a Sense of Order, Elegance, and Perspicuity";

28. Buchanan, *English Syntax,* 10, 115.
29. Ibid., 166–68.
30. Ibid., 181–93.

whereas, as we have seen, "a wrong Arrangement, even when accurately pointed, will be always perplexing and disgusting". Given a right arrangement, however, the four major stops are enough to distinguish the sense, though their number, we are told, "is defective with respect to the requisite Variety of Pause; and for directing to a just and well-regulated Pronunciation".

There follow some two and a half pages on the issues raised by the comma. It is used to distinguish the smallest members of sentences: *The Lord God is merciful, long-suffering, slow to wrath,* etc.; and of lists: *The Enemy advance with Drums, Trumpets, Clarions, Fifes,* etc. Then rather strangely, since Mr. Buchanan (or his printer) does not himself follow his own rule in the ensuing sentence: "every Verb must have its Noun expressed or understood, and every Noun its Verb expressed or understood; and every distinct Verb or Noun, expressed or understood, must have a Comma to distinguish it". His ambitions for the comma go on and on. It should be used "to distinguish Adverbs of a contrary Meaning", and to indicate "Adjectives belonging to the same noun, except the last"; before "a copulative or disjunctive Conjunction in a compound Sentence"; but *not* used when two nouns or adjectives are "connected by a single Copulative or Disjunctive". The comma is always placed after the relatives "who", "which", "whom", etc. whenever a "Circumstance" is interjected. Aware at last that tedium is rising like dawn's miasma from the village swamp, he brings it all to a finish, advising that when in doubt it is wise to resort to the Rules of Arrangement.

He is less prolix about the semicolon. He mentions its essential incomplete-sense feature (e.g., to be used when several "Nouns, with their different Epithets, equally relate to the same Verb"), and gives a few other 'musts' about its presence. The colon, of course, is brightly complete, marking "a perfect Sense; yet, so as to leave the Mind in Suspense and Expectation of what is to follow". His line-dot period offers no surprises: it brings all to a close when the sense is "completely ended". He rounds off his theory with a sample of "a Period containing all the foregoing Points".

> Many Ladies distinguish themselves by the Education of their Children, Care of their Families, and Love of their Husbands; which are the great Qualities and Atchievements of Woman kind: As, the making of War, the carrying on of

> Traffic, the Administration of Justice, are those by which Men grow famous, and get themselves a Name.

Deaf to the groans of future feminists, Buchanan then whips out his pen and begins a practical analysis (he calls it "resolution") of this sentence in terms of its nine distinct Members, "which are in effect so many Sentences". One by one he sets them on the scales to weigh their importance and to justify the points that he has chosen to distinguish them. He concludes this exercise with a tip for new players: A sentence ought "to express one entire Thought or mental Proposition". As for style (an increasingly popular subject in the manuals of the day), another grave wink: long periods make solemn impressions and ought to be variously relieved by short and lively ones. Further, one should show some concern for the recipient of a communication and refrain, for example, from introducing a lengthy period until the attention is sure to be fixed. With that in mind, he pronounces the following "Commencement of a Letter to a very young Lady on her Marriage" to be faulty:

> Madam, the Hurry and Impertinence of receiving and paying Visits, on account of your Marriage, being now over, you are beginning to enter into a Course of Life, where you will want much Advice to divert you from falling into many Errors, Fopperies and Follies, to which your Sex is subject.

Which it is. Aye. Very.

Mr. Buchanan is still not quite finished. He wants to tell us about voice control, and we must let him, for the subject, as will soon be seen, is closely allied to ours. In general, he follows his predecessors in noting that the marks of interrogation and admiration demand a rise in the voice; whereas, the other four stops are sadly wanting in the guidance of vocal production needed to suggest the passions and emotions of the soul. A study of Nature, he eventually concludes, is the necessary prerequisite for accurate vocal reproduction in these exciting instances. The four points will tell only the length of the pause to be made (for Buchanan, rulers are a must): "A Comma stops the voice while we can tell one; the Semicolon two; the Colon three; and the Period four". We are sorry to see this persistent for-

mula rear up yet again, but the reader will be happy to learn that, by now, it was already poised on the downhill slope to oblivion.

'Parenthesis' next becomes the topic. Buchanan slaps the Fielding wrist for over-use and misuse of parentheses in *Joseph Andrews,* and deals similarly with Dean Stanhope for parenthetic failures in his *Christian Directory.* Noting the rampant and unwarranted use of this device, he strikes it from the beginning of sentences and berates its tendency to include entire paragraphs. The dash, now a regular element on a page of print, is here called "a double Period because it denotes a Pause of two Periods; and indicates that the Sentence or Words after which it is marked, are worthy of Consideration". Once the scientific agenda is over, we are whisked back to the atmosphere of early-seventeenth-century grammatical exegeses and stunned to be informed that: a) a paragraph break (he does not discuss what the paragraph is) demands a count of eight; and b) the little upturned faces around the fireside are required to wait for the duration of sixteen counts (yes!), should a paragraph-break-plus-extra-blank-line appear in Father's reading selection for the evening.

Having seen Mr. Buchanan thus in action, it will come as no surprise to learn that he spent the final years of his life rearranging and repunctuating the first six books of *Paradise Lost.* He explains his purpose: "Milton's style is more violently inverted than that of any other English poet; And . . . every inverted sentence, especially in verse, becomes almost unintelligible to youth, and is obscure even to grown persons, who are not well acquainted with syntax". To make Milton more accessible to a young and ignorant public, Buchanan undertakes to render him up in a more relaxed language, one where "the words of a sentence naturally follow one another, in the same order with the conceptions of our minds".[31] All sentences, even John Milton's, must have a subject and a verb, and all the "under parts" that qualify these capital parts must follow as the mind perceives them and must be so distinguished.

The subtitle of this famous exercise reads: "The Words of the Text being arranged, at the bottom of each Page, in the same natural Order with the Conceptions of the Mind; and the Ellipsis properly

31. James Buchanan, *The First Six Books of Milton's "Paradise Lost" Rendered into Grammatical Construction* (Edinburgh: A. Kincaid, W. Creech, and J. Balfour, 1773), 2.

supplied, without any Alteration in the Diction of the Poem". Thereafter:[32]

(Milton): Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world . . . ,
Sing, heavenly muse, . . .

(Buchanan): O heavenly muse, sing of man's first disobedience, and of the fruit of that forbidden tree, . . .

James Buchanan died during the parturition of this ambitious project, and the book was brought out posthumously by an admiring friend. Mrs. Buchanan was vastly surprised to learn of her husband's final effort to straighten out the world, a fact suggesting the she-was-illiterate-but-I-loved-her-anyway sort of marriage, common to the times. The story has a happy ending, however, for we are told by the generous friend that the money brought in by the book was a godsend to the widow and the numerous Buchanan brood.

Mr. Buchanan, despite his harsh manner, commands our respect for the grave importance he attached to the matter of a clear communication. He is right about syntax, of course. No punctuation can mend where it goes wrong; and Milton might, after all, have conceded a little to youth's impatience.

JAMES BURROW

We now arrive at a landmark, the publication in 1771 of James Burrow's *De usu et ratione interpungendi: An Essay on the Use of Pointing, and Facility of Practising It.* As the title indicates, this is a book devoted entirely to the matter of punctuating, and the first notable one of this period to be so. In the preface Mr. Burrow states his goal to be the persuasion of his readers (by implication a sorry crowd) to *some* sort of punctuation. There is no reason, he says, to condemn or avoid it because of its difficulty (if you can *talk,* you can do it). He does not wish to lay down indisputable rules about point usage,

32. Buchanan, *First Six Books,* 19.

but merely to convince us that sensible usage will disambiguate our intended meaning and often prevent sheer error. Compare, he recommends, the nonsense of this simple, malpointed verse:[33]

> Every Lady in this Land
> Hath *twenty* Nails upon *each* Hand;
> *Five and twenty* on Hands *and feet*:
> And this is *true*, without Deceit.

with the anatomical exactitude of the second:

> Every Lady in this Land
> Hath *twenty* Nails; upon each Hand
> *Five*; and twenty on Hands *and* Feet;
> And this *is* true, without Deceit.

Like Lowth (though more purely elocutionary), Burrow relates sensible punctuation to the sound of the voice in sensible pronunciation. Pauses, accents, emphases, tone—all can be indicated by punctuation. As a man knows how he pronounces, so what he expresses on paper may be made intelligible to another person. The pauses should be treated proportionately (Burrow is not a ruler-tapper) and "every artifice [including under-scoring] that can be invented should be used to lead the Reader's Apprehension into the Track of the Writer's meaning". For proof of the unacceptable consequence of not doing so, he invites us to look up some old law reports, Year-books, Plowden, or Rolle and cast our wretched eyes over all that huddled text, so rebarbative and uninviting, with neither point nor paragraph to rescue comprehension.[34]

Mr. Burrow gently urges the non-scholar and anti-punctator to shape up, for there is nothing to be afraid of in the friendly landscape of punctuation. A full sentence is merely a collection of constructive parts with their degrees of connection—all of which becomes immediately apparent upon reading aloud, though, alas, not necessarily conducive to "correct" pointing. For why should all men point alike

33. James Burrow, *De usu et ratione interpungendi* (London: J. Worrall and B. Tovey, 1771), 11.
34. Ibid., 12.

when they do not speak alike? Mr. Burrow makes such comfortable company. But we soon see that he has given very deep thought to the matter and quietly developed some strong opinions. Cautioning that more help than he had hitherto suggested might be necessary to a just comprehension of serious, or abstruse, works, he turns his chatty but sensitive attention to the fine tuning of the four stops.

Following Lowth, he rejects the *semiperiodus* (that popular and overused letterwriter's device—a line dot followed by a lowercased continuation, denoting a stronger connection between the parts than a full period would indicate). He himself "always make[s] use of the semicolon" in those places where others use many colons in a sentence. He refers to Chambers' *Cyclopaedia* for a description of the points and promptly stumbles across a misplanted semicolon, which he pauses to dispute. It is a matter of clarification of grammar in this case, he says. Chambers had written:[35]

> The Discourse consisted of *two* Parts; In the *first,* was shewn the *Necessity* of fighting; in the *second,* the *Advantages* that would redound from it.

For the first semicolon, Burrow suggests that a colon would be more appropriate, and generally the modern eye is with him. But he cautions against a multitude of colons (*pace* Lowth, Ward, Manutius, and others), reasoning that as the *semiperiodus* is more or less the equivalent of the colon [which it is not: it is bigger and more powerful] and *semiperiodus* means 'half a period', it is nonsense to divide sentences into more than two of them. After this mathematical digression he slips on his rhetorical cap to discuss the delicate tone implications that a dash can conjure up. Listen. Hamlet is talking:[36]

> To die -- to sleep ------ to sleep? ---- perchance to dream ----: For -- in that Sleep of Death, what Dreams may come,

35. Burrow, *De usu,* 18–21.
36. Ibid., 19.

The lengths of the dash can vary tellingly. And the ending comma is so much less slowing than the positive "?" that both Lowth and Ward preferred for this same passage.

William Ward, though refusing to describe the dirty details of pointing to his public, had nevertheless bestrewed his own writing with copious stops in order to maintain the symbiosis of voice with text. He rather grieved that there were not more guides to appropriate voice production for the multifarious flavors of the "!". Admiration, Wishing, Grief, Pity, Indignation, Contempt, and Sneer made up his list, but one can always think up more. On the other hand, Bishop Lowth had felt it adequate merely to say that the "!" was to mark an elevation of the voice and that the reader should use his own good sense. Burrow barely touches upon the "!" and the "?", though he digs busily into the matter of parenthesis, recommending it solidly for reasons of perspicuity. He encourages his followers to mark it off with points both before and after [thus: "Rhubarb, rhubarb, (blah-blah-blah), rhubarb, rhubarb"], if the flow of the syntax requires it. Overall, Mr. Burrow is aurally oriented, though versatile. He fields rhetorical and syntactical curves with agility, even charm, and is most refreshing company compared with his contemporaries. In general, he adopts the principles and attitudes of his mentor Lowth. If others of more drive and influence had had his grace, perhaps the subject of punctuation would not have acquired its deadening reputation.

SOME MANUSCRIPT SAMPLES FROM THIS PERIOD

Having reached the beginning of the fourth quarter of the eighteenth century, the half-way mark, so to speak, of today's march through the annals of punctuational history, we will find it enlightening (we hope) to inspect some manuscripts of the period, over which the interpretive and interfering printer had no say. As will be seen, a great freedom rides with the hand-wielded pen, as though the voice itself were spilling out onto the page with all its customary exigency, hesitancy, and change of direction. The lack of formality, the assumption of familiar context and sympathetic reaction, all played a part in making it so, no doubt, just as they do today. The intimacy of the handwritten statement gives a candid view of what by way of

punctuation was deemed so many years ago to be crucial to the comprehension of the intended meaning.

The following example, a paragraph from Lawrence Sterne's holograph *The Bramine Journal* ("—tis a Diary of the miserable feeling of a person separated from a Lady for whose Society he languish'd—"), palpitates with the urgency and warmth of the writer's (feigned or not) emotion,[37] much aided by the use of his famous dash. It is dated June 10, 1767:

> You are stretching over now in the Trade Winds from the Cape to Madrass—(I hope)—but I know it not. some friendly Ship you probably have met wth, and I never read an Acc^{t} of an India Man arrived—but I expect that it is the Messenger of the news my heart is upon the rack for. —I calculate, That you will arrive at Bombay by the beginning of October—by February, I shall surely hear from you thence—but from Madrass sooner. —I expect you Eliza in person, by September—& shall scarse go to London till March—for what have I to do there, when (except printing my Books) I have no Interest or Passion to gratify—
>
> [British Library Ms. 34,527, f. 21]

More formal lines of 4 July 1776 from "The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America" read as follows:

> In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people. Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our Brittish brethren.

37. Interestingly, on folio 43 of the same manuscript book, there is a scathing undated note written by William Makepeace Thackeray about the *Journal.* Thackeray is denouncing Stern's insincerity:

> However on the day Sterne was writing to Lady P, and going to Miss __'s benefit he is dying in his Journal to the Brahmine, can't eat, has the Doctor, and is in a dreadful way. He wasn't dying but lying I'm afraid—God help him—a falser and wickeder man, its difficult to read of.

In the year 1784 Benjamin Franklin wrote from France in language very close to speech:

> Dear Son,
>
> I received your Letters of the 28th of August, and 10th of September, with the Newspapers by M. Sailly, but they were very incompleat and broken Sets, many being omitted perhaps the most material, which is disagreable to me who wish to be well inform'd of what is doing among you. . . . Benny continues well, and grows amazingly. He is a very sensible and a very good Lad, and I love him much. I had Thoughts of bringing him up under his Cousin, and fitting him for Public Business, thinking he might be of Service hereafter to his Country; but being now convinc'd that *Service is no Inheritance,* as the Proverb says, I have determin'd to give him a Trade that he may have something to depend on, and not be oblig'd to ask Favours or offices of anybody. . . .
>
> [British Library Ms. Stowe 755, f. 39]

On 30 June 1788, Edward Gibbon wrote to his Aunt Hester—a delicate letter. The arrangement of clause and phrase, successfully marshalled by points and signaling words, indicates the attention that Gibbon expended on his necessarily cunning argument.[38]

38. In letterwriting, where one's words often land on the page before their sequence is fully developed in the mind (this being particularly noticeable in cases where a complex statement is in progress), the introductory lines are often profusely demarked by points, whereas the resolving ones are often entirely without any breaks at all. The pausal frequency is evidence of the hesitation that precedes an established and confident flow. Gibbons is a counter example to this generality. About his own prose style Edward Gibbon wrote in his *Memoirs of My Life* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1984), 161:

> It has always been my practice to cast a long paragraph in a single mould, to try it by my ear, to deposit it in my memory, but to suspend the action of the pen till I had given the last polish to my work.

Another controlled pen was Samuel Johnson's. Says Boswell of Johnson's composing technique (cf. James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*, [Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1948], 137):

Dear Madam.

I was truly disappointed that you could not admit my visit this spring and still more concerned at the motive of your refusal. Yet I was glad to hear of your indisposition from your own pen; the firmness of the hand and style gave me the most pleasing assurances of your strength; and I most sincerely hope that your recovery will be compleated and established by the return of summer. I am now preparing, by a last visit to Lord and Lady Sheffield, for my departure to the Continent, and feel as I ought your kind anxiety at my leaving England, but you will not disapprove my chusing the place most agreable to my circumstances and temper, and I need not remind you that all countries are under the care of the same providence. Your good wishes and advice will not, I trust, be thrown away on a barren soil; and whatever you may have been told of my opinions, I can assure you with truth, that I consider Religion as the best guide of youth and the best support of old age: that I firmly believe there is less real happiness in the business and pleasures of the World, than in the life, which you have chosen, of devotion and retirement. . . .

[British Library Ms. 34,486, f. 31]

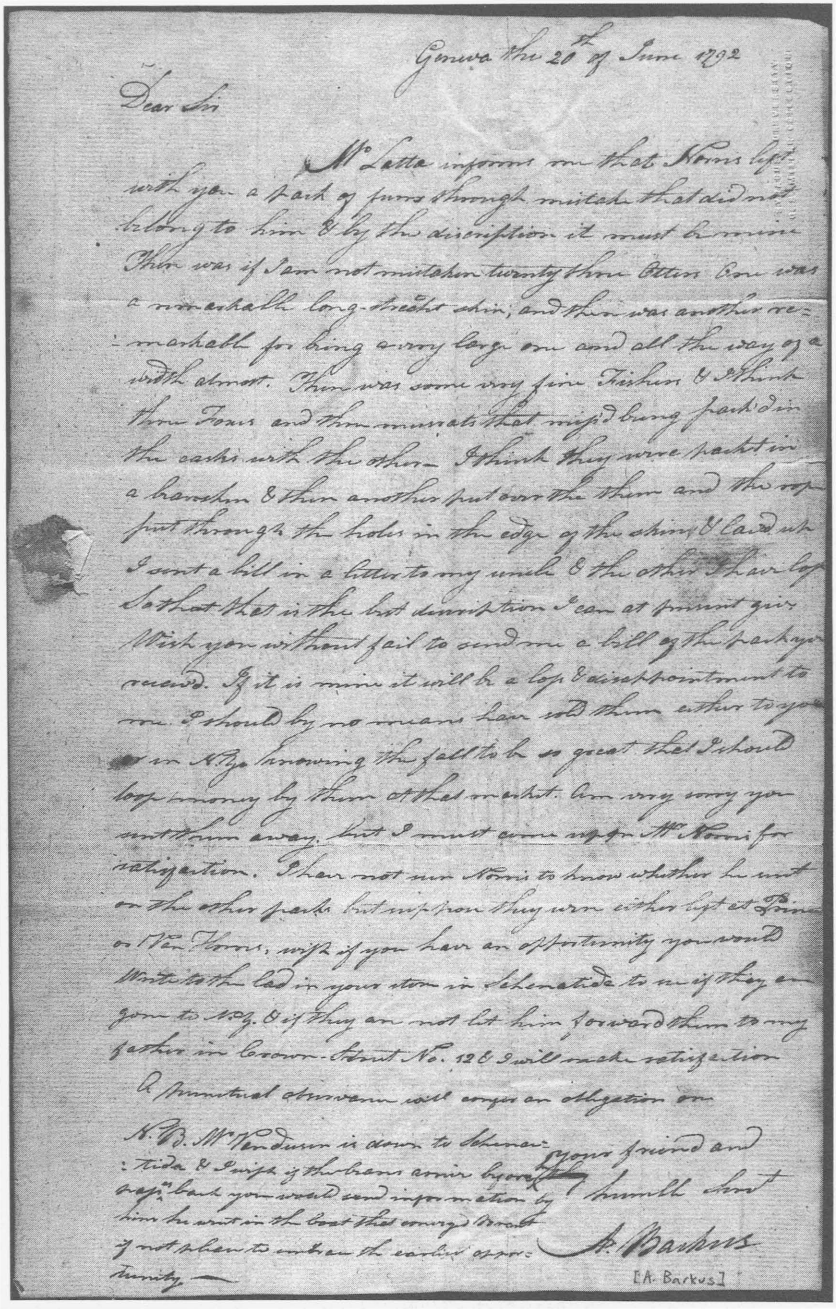
For a whiff of the American woods, we turn now to the opening lines of a letter written by a Mr. A. Barkus to Peter Smith (the father of Gerrit Smith) from Geneva, New York, on 20 June 1792.

Dear Sir

Mr. Latta informs me that Norris left with you a pack of furs through mistake that did not belong to him & by the discription it must be mine There was if I am not mistaken

---

Sir Joshua Reynolds once asked Dr. Johnson by what means he had attained his extraordinary accuracy and flow of language. He told him that he had early laid it down as a fixed rule to do his best on every occasion, and in every company; to impart whatever he knew in the most forcible language he could put it in; and that by constant practice, and never suffering any careless expressions to escape him, or attempting to deliver his thoughts without arranging them in the clearest manner, it became habitual to him.



Mr. Barkus's pen strokes are superior to his punctuation. Courtesy of the Syracuse University Library.

twenty three Otters one was a remarkable long-stretcht skin; and there was another remarkable for being a very large one and all the way of a width almost. There was some very fine Fishers and I think three Foxes and three muskrats that missed being packed in the casks with the other—I think they were packed in a bear-skin & then another put over the them [sic] and the rope put through the holes in the edge of the skin & laced up

[Peter Smith Papers, Syracuse University Library]

PROMINENT GRAMMARIANS OF THE LAST QUARTER OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

THOMAS SHERIDAN

It was during the last quarter of the eighteenth century that the more exceptional grammarians arrived at some understanding of the complications caused by the breakaway of the written language from the spoken and the reapplication of spoken to written through the art form of reading aloud from text. The mix of such ideas was intellectually new, as well as difficult. While some scholars were evaluating the structural stops for the page, others were carrying on similar researches in the area of elocution. It was here, with the spoken word, that the activity brought to light so many fresh and useful insights.

Thomas Sheridan, actor, father of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, and an eminent grammarian and dictionary compiler during the period under our inspection, put out in 1781 *A Rhetorical Grammar*, a textbook that enjoyed considerable popularity on both sides of the Atlantic. The author, centering his attention on the proper pronunciation of English, quite rightly includes a chapter entitled "Pauses or Stops", and there he has much to say that will be of interest to us.[39] He begins by accounting for the arbitrariness of punctating rules.

39. Thomas Sheridan, *A Rhetorical Grammar of the English Language* (Dublin: Messrs. Price, W. and H. Whitestone, Sleater, Sheppard, G. Burnet, R. Cross, Flin, Stewart, Mills, Wilkinson, Exshaw, Perrin, Byrne, 1781; reprint, Menston, England: Scolar Press, 1969), 103. For this book Sheridan revised and corrected the introductory materials to *A General Dictionary*, which he had published the year before, in 1780. These two works, along with his *British Education* (1756) for philosopher-

Nobody seems to understand them, he says. He connects this failure to the fact that the art of punctuation is too closely allied to grammar, and hence, disregardful of the needs of speech, where the pauses group the units of words differently. With this demure observation, Mr. Sheridan has put his finger absolutely and unerringly on the problem, a problem that still plagues schoolchildren, not to mention teachers, editors, writers, psychologists, linguists, philosophers—indeed, everybody who thinks about putting his thoughts on paper. What is the relationship of grammatical units to spoken word groups? And why, after all these centuries of misfit and puzzlement, has no satisfactory resolution presented itself?

Mr. Sheridan does not attempt an answer. His attention is fixed on the oral-aural side of the net: how best to lay out one's pauses in the action of reading aloud. The key, he says, is emphasis. "Emphasis is the link which connects words together, and forms them into sentences, or into members of sentences."[40] And at the end of each emphasis, lies the proper seat of the pause. Thus in a sentence we have not only the light ripple of word accents, but also the rolling swells of emphasized groups. Sheridan deplores the artificiality of the count-to-four system, in which a mere handful of stops rigidifies all subtlety of tone and cadence. But even in writing, the stops annoy him, since they invite pauses that do not coincide with the natural train of our ideas. More is needed to what they provide, and to this end he proposes the following method of dealing with materials that are to be read aloud. But before beginning, he asks that we first erase all the standard punctuation from the page, and then regroup for action.[41]

> For the shortest pause insert a small inclined line, thus: '
> For the second, double the time of the former, two: ''
> For a full stop, three: '''
> For a longer pause still: =
> (Emphasized words or syllables will be marked "by placing

statesmen and *Elements of English* (1786) for the elementary classroom, were to exercise a profound influence on writers and educational methods for fifty years. Like so many of the language experts of his time, Mr. Sheridan tends to treat rhetorical and grammatical aspects of punctuation without differentiation.

40. Sheridan, *Rhetorical Grammar*, 103.

41. Ibid., 109.

a sloping line inclining to the right, over the accented letter".)

Thus:

> D 'early belo 'ved brethren = The scripture moveth us' in su 'ndry places' to acknow 'lege and confe 'ss our manifold sins and wickedness'' and that we should not disse 'mble' nor clo 'ke them' before the face of Almighty God' our Hea 'venly Father'' . . .

Having exposed the incompatibility between grammar-based punctuation and that necessary for a good oral rendition, Mr. Sheridan has completed what he has to say to us. But it is interesting to see how he has punctuated his own treatise for the printer. A sample sentence, the breathless opener for his chapter on pointing, is as follows:[42]

> Stopping, like spelling, has, at different periods of time, and by different persons, been considered, in a great measure, as arbitrary, and has had its different fashions; nor are there at this day any sure general rules established for the practice of that art.

Like so many authors who must rally their wits to begin their theses, he soon tires of those short, nervous demarcations, and reels out the final clause without inhibition.

JOHN WALKER

The year 1781 proved a good one for the advancement of language understanding. John Walker, who lectured extensively at Oxford on rhetorical subjects, was a tremendous influence in the field, and we owe to a statement in his prestigious *Elements of Elocution,* one of the classic treatises published during the eighteenth century, the first clear presentation of the Gordian knot that now importunately demands resolution.[43]

42. Sheridan, *Rhetorical Grammar,* 103.

43. John Walker, *Elements of Elocution,* 2 vols. (London: Printed for the Author, 1781; reprint, Menston, England: Scolar Press, 1969), 1:4.

> In order, therefore, to have as clear an idea of punctuation as possible, it will be necessary to consider it as related to grammar and rhetoric distinctly; it will not be easy to say any thing new on punctuation, as it relates to grammar, but it will not be difficult to shew, what perplexity it is involved in when reduced to enunciation; and how necessary it is to understand distinctly the rhetorical as well as grammatical division of a sentence, if we would wish to arrive at precision and accuracy in reading and speaking: . . . and as the basis of rhetoric and oratory is grammar, it will be absolutely necessary to consider punctuation as it relates precisely to the sense, before it is viewed as it relates to the force, beauty, and harmony of language.

Mr. Walker then recounts the general principles of grammatical punctuation, listing the four stops with their accepted counts, as well as the interrogation mark, the exclamation mark, and the parenthesis (now fully fledged), making reference to the opinions of both Lowth and Burrow. It is not his intention, he says, to disturb the present practice of punctuation, but only to add such aids as are actually made use of by the best readers and speakers. In a long sentence, a reader will be well accommodated if the stops demark the major divisions of the sentence. But a judicious speaker will wish to pause much more frequently. Lowth has said that no commas are wanted in a simple sentence, for example: "The passion for praise produces excellent effects in women of sense". Ha! says Walker, what about "A violent passion for universal admiration produces the most ridiculous circumstances in the general behaviour of women of the most excellent understandings"? That simple sentence is far too long to handle gracefully in a single breath, and it certainly admits (perhaps even requires) pauses when spoken aloud.[44]

One could object that the admission of commas between grammatically connected words would overturn all rules for punctuation. Such an objection would have weight, if the eye were the sole judge of the sense of composition. But it is not. The ear is the perfect judge of all that is spoken, and its criteria are quite different from those of the eye. In short, the stops that satisfy the eye and the ear are different, and sometimes at variance. While the eye deals with

44. Ibid., 1:18–26.

pauses between regiment-sized syntactical arrangements, the ear and tongue are busy, indeed very busy, regathering the material into mini-idea word-platoons, in order to pronounce them easily and forcibly. Here, Walker notes that the ear, though it is often far more lax than the eye, has its own fierce restrictions against particular separations of word units. For example, the ear would not enjoy tracking this verbalization: "A violent passion for universal, admiration produces the most ridiculous, consequences in the general, behaviour of women of the most excellent understandings"; for the pauses in this version destroy aural assimilation. But, interestingly, if one speaks out this sentence in a natural manner, pausing wherever the sense allows, a fine dramatic effect is achieved without stress to the lungs. That being true, says Walker, it is not surprising to see how few are the grammatical connections that absolutely refuse a suspension of pronunciation. If the voice were permitted to stop only where the written points allowed for pause, many an able oral-reader would expire gasping. The common basic rule for both writing and speaking should be to convey ideas distinctly, by separating or uniting as meaning dictates. Words that should not be separated will be determined by their sense and by the closeness of the sense attachment to the word on either side.[45]

To demonstrate further instances of the incompatibility of aural with visual renderings of text, Mr. Walker offers the following sentence:[46]

> Riches, pleasure, and health become evils to the generality of mankind.

There are few readers, he notes, who would not put in a longer pause between "health" and "become", than between "Riches" and "pleasure"; and yet there are few writers or printers who would not insert a pause after the two first nouns and omit it after the third. Their practice must arise from the perception of the peculiar bond between subject and verb, a relationship that emerges sharply out of the flattened contours of the written line, making a writer loath to violate it. An oral reader, pressed in the heat of performance by a choice of effects, has not the time to be so syntactically alert.

45. Walker, *Elements*, 34–35, 47.
46. Ibid., 29–30.

But it is well, Mr. Walker continues, that the speaking voice know the secrets of syntax, so that it may better judge the relationships of hierarchies and the fit of modifications. Essentially, sentences can be divided into three types. There is the tight period, wherein each member is unable to stand alone. There is a looser period, wherein the first member can stand alone, but the intended meaning is incomplete because of the qualification offered in the second member. And there is the 'loose' statement, which is a conglomerate of independent ideas, or *sententiolae,* in the manner of Sir Thomas Browne, for example (see Part Four). The pauses that divide the severally membered sentences will be various and indefinite. Although the comma, semicolon, colon, and period conventionally maintain the pleasing proportions of 1, 2, 4, 8, such rigidity is useless. Everyone can feel a difference between a greater and smaller pause. Rules for further refinement only confuse. Therefore, Mr. Walker recommends that only three stops be used to control the gush of wordage. The smaller pause will remain the comma; the greater will be the combination of semicolon and colon; and the greatest will be the period. The ancients were satisfied with three. Therefore, three will do, since they "answer every useful purpose in writing and reading".[47]

The greater break, Mr. Walker concludes, will be used when it is necessary to divide the period into two major constructive parts: at that point where the expectation begins to be answered, or where one part of the sentence begins to modify the other, or in cases of inversion. It will also be used in "loose periods", where a modifying additional member continues on after the period has reached a point where it contains a perfect sense and is structurally complete. Its presence at this juncture is so necessary to the reader that it is most forcefully recommended to all correctors of the press that they honor its importance by the placement of a greater point (a semicolon or

47. Ibid., 62–69. Later in *The Rhetorical Grammar* (London: Printed for the Author, 1785; reprint, Menston, England: Scolar Press, 1971), J. Walker would simplify his division of sentence types. He remained adamant, however, about the pitfalls to an oral reader of the "loose" sentence. This kind of sentence had been described authoritatively by George Campbell, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric,* 2 vols. (London: W. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1776), 1:339–347, as being a whole period with an attachment at the end, the first portion of which will actually complete a perfect sentence, but not necessarily all the aspects of it that the author had in mind.

colon) to mark it. The smaller pause is used merely to mark off subordinate phrases and short qualifying adjuncts, depending on the complexity and length of the total period. So that the basic structure of the sentence may be clear, the comma should not participate in marking the major divisions, those little sentences or *sententiolae*, where the sense has been completed.[48]

With all these things laid out to his satisfaction, Mr. Walker begins to prescribe particular subrules. After a nominative consisting of more than one word, we are told that there must be a pause. Material intervening between the verb and its accusative case must be considered parenthetical and so distinguished by short pauses. Words intervening between the principal verb and an infinitive must be marked off. "That" used as a causal conjunction must be preceded by a short pause. This section, which contains so much that strikes the modern punctator as old-fashioned and strictured, is followed by a careful study of the voice inflexions that should accompany such pauses. Here, one is reminded strongly of the principles of Gregorian chant, where the unities of sense are indicated by drops and rises in pitch (see Part Two). Walker recommends that the greater pause dividing the principal parts of a period be preceded by a rising inflexion and that the members of complete sense be preceded by a falling, or disjunctive inflection, and so on, with citations of numerous exceptions and special cases. This is a man who thinks of everything.

But there is more. He wonders whether printers are too pedantic in setting question marks after rhetorical questions, whether an exclamation mark ought to accompany *all* the subtleties of emotion, or whether new signals should be devised for greater explicitness. Does "How mysterious are the ways of Providence!" merely register the impatience of disappointment? Or is some metaphysical inquiry actually in progress? And how shall we mark an exclamation where question is intermingled, and how speak what we have marked? As for the parenthesis: there is no point, he says, in attempting to review here what Mr. Lowth failed to do justice to in his "so few words". (Walker is always after our Bishop for wrapping it up too soon.) Walker's list of the delightful aspects of the parenthesis—its suggestion of casualness, of luxuriance of mind, of passionate outburst smack in the middle of pure calm—is too detailed for inclusion

48. Walker, *Elements*, 1:184.

in this discursive survey.[49] Suffice it to say that Mr. Walker relished the rumination of each and every one.

The second volume of *The Elements of Elocution* discusses the punctuation of poetry and the silliness of those well-entrenched rules that put capital pauses regularly at the end of each line and at the caesura; that insert subordinate pauses on either side of the caesura according to syllable count and regardless of sense or even whether such breaks might split a word. Arguing against the predilections of Sheridan, who championed keeping poetry markedly different from prose, Walker, as always, pleads on behalf of undistorted meaning. The chopping of verse lines into four portions with caesuras and demi-caesuras, is not always an effective ploy. As for the pause at the end of each line:[50]

> Why is a reader to do that which his author has neglected to do, and indeed seems to have forbidden by the very nature of the composition? . . . For in all pronunciation, whether prosaic or poetic, at the beginning of every fresh portion, the mind must necessarily have the pause of the sense in view, and this prospect of the sense must regulate the voice for that portion, to the entire neglect of any length in the verse: as an attention to this must necessarily interrupt that flow or current in the pronunciation, which the sense demands.

Following this innovative opinion, Mr. Walker reverts to quaintness and tosses into his pot a few of the too-familiar, antediluvian bones. Along with voice inflection, gestures and demeanor must be added to the recipe for a better rendition of meaning. Each of the passions, we are told, demands a special handling. Violent ones call for a bracing of the sinews; grief for the relaxation of the frame.

49. Ibid., 320–50. The parenthesis was variously maligned and admired during this period. Mr. Walker adds a small complication to its multifarious activities: It should be pronounced in a lower tone of voice, "and conclude with the same pause and inflexion which terminate the member that immediately precedes it" —all of which calls for rather a lot of quick thinking on the part of the oral reader. This attitude might account for the scrupulous punctuist's (Walker's term) desire to enclose, as Burrow suggested, the parenthetical insert not only with the usual parentheses marks but also with points.

50. Ibid., 2:202–15.

Tranquillity may be conveyed by the composure of the countenance. But[51]

> when joy arises from ludicrous or fugitive amusements, . . . it is called merriment or mirth. Mirth opens the mouth horizontally, raises the cheeks high, lessens the aperture of the eyes, and when violent, shakes and convulses the whole frame, fills the eyes with tears, and occasions holding the sides from the pain the convulsive laughter gives them.

Is this the way one dealt with amusing trivia at the Walker dinner table? It is odd, yet so typical of his time, that Mr. Walker can reason his way free of prescription in some areas, and in others revert eagerly to the haven it offers.

Mr. Walker's *Rhetorical Grammar* was published in 1785 and thereafter nine times up to 1823 (twice at Boston, in 1814 and 1822). Essentially, it is a single-volume reworking of all that had been formulated in his earlier *Elements,* with the advantage of four years' worth of more hard thought. A few valuable details stand out and should be touched upon.

Mr. Walker now speaks of only two sentence types—the compact and the loose; and his discussion of the appropriate points to accompany them is crisp and assured. The confirming convention obliges him here to accept the inevitability of there being two "greater" stops—the semicolon and colon; but he still protests the ambiguities they seemed determined to churn up. These two "fallacious guides" would be improved, he feels, by the annexation of a small mark (without time value: no ruler) to indicate whether they signified "the completeness or incompleteness of the sense", one of the great *desiderata* of punctuation being a method to clarify definitively the completeness of meaning.[52]

> The intention of the points is, in the first place, to fix and determine the sense when it might otherwise be doubtful; and, in the next place, to apprize the reader of the sense of part of a sentence before he has seen the whole. A mark,

51. Walker, *Elements,* 2:282–94.
52. Walker, *Rhetorical Grammar,* 34–35, 41, 45, and 75–76.

therefore, which accomplishes this purpose, must unquestionably be of the utmost importance to the art of reading.

When all is said and done, Mr. Walker has made the startling submission that there are *three* applications for punctuation; indeed, three art forms to cope with: speaking (oral-aural, the mother source of language); writing (visual, derived from speaking but to be practised in silence); and reading aloud (visual and oral-aural). Reading aloud is, of course, hazardously complicated since the tongue is activated by the eye's course along the written line (which itself is a modification of speech) and must adopt as natural a speaking air as will be compatible with the text. Free, discursive speech applies its own battery of pauses, emphases, and intonations. Writing, to conjure up the same ideas in a meaningful way, reframes the words syntactically to expose the sentential structures. Reading aloud must handle both operations with minimal error. And to do that it needs a differently oriented punctuation—something aural-oral in addition to grammatical-visual. Mr. Walker modifies his thinking about these complications throughout his successive writings.

In *Melody of Speaking* (1787), Mr. Walker presents his final and most influential statement on the topic. This is a small book, designed for the practising oral reader, in which two extracts of the same passage are laid out side by side, the verso additionally pointed with the author's newly devised elocutionary punctuation. Thus, the elocutionary side of the page is both syntactically pointed, and marked with insertions of vertical lines (indicating pause) between word groups, as well as grave and acute accents (indicating, respectively, a decline or rise of voice). Italicized parentheses, interposed when they are deemed crucial to a just and spirited delivery, instruct the accompanying demeanor. The following has been transcribed from the verso of "Mr. Pitt's Answer to Mr. H. Walpole":[53]

(*Contempt.*) In the fírst sense, Sir, | the charge is tòo | trífling | to be confùted, | and deserves ònly | to be méntioned | that it may be despìsed. | (*Modest confidence.*) I

53. John Walker, *The Melody of Speaking* (London: Printed for the Author, 1787), 22. It is interesting to notice what methods Mr. Walker decided *not* to use in his search for optimal elocutionary punctating. One discard was the gathering together of whole word units into single words (intosinglewords). Another was hyphenating

am at líberty, | like every other màn, | to use my own lánguage, | and though I may perhaps have sóme ambition | to please thìs gentleman, | I sháll not | lày myself | under àny | restráint, | nor véry | solìcitously | copy (*Sneer*) hìs diction | or hís mien, | however matùred | by áge, | or módelled | by expèrience.|

For punctators John Walker's analysis of the dual contributions of eye and ear to the speak/write/read-aloud process represents a sparkling moment in our long archival history. Linguistic scholars who were to follow him would be deflected from these ideas by excitements in the historical areas of their field—language origin and etymology—and less impelled to gyre about in Walkerian ethers. Though they showed signs of having seen the great vision themselves, they were not keen to enforce the finicky specifics of his system in their own rule books nor to instil in their pupils a sense of the chase. Thus, though a significant mystery had been sighted, it was allowed to vanish. Grammarians were becoming practical. Being too bound up in social climbing and bread winning to continue the pursuit of a supreme understanding of punctuation, they turned their energies to hounding the stragglers—the young, the ignorant, women, and foreigners.

NOAH WEBSTER

For the title page of his *Grammatical Institute* in three parts (Part I published in 1783), Noah Webster borrowed the Ciceronian *Usus est Norma Loquendi* (Custom is the rule of speaking). The dictum foreshadows an iconoclastic intent, which indeed manifests itself on the opening page of the introduction. No longer will America preserve its unshaken attachment to all the values of Great Britain, hitherto "implicitly supposed to be the *best* on earth". That nation, we are told, must herewith be viewed with abhorrence, pity, and contempt. With a frisson of suspense, we turn the page to read:[54]

(into-single-words). Neither would have proved to be as effective as his choice of the simple bar (|) with accompanying accents for rise and fall of the voice.

54. Noah Webster, *A Grammatical Institute of the English Lanuage*, 3 pts. (Hartford: Hudson & Goodwin, 1783–1800), 1:4.

> While the Americans stand astonished at their former delusion and enjoy the pleasure of a final separation from their insolent sovereigns, it becomes their duty to attend to the arts of peace, and particularly to the interests of literature. . . . We find Englishmen practising upon very erroneous maxims in politics and religion; and possibly we shall find, upon careful examination, that their methods of education are equally erroneous and defective.

And indeed, we do.

The tone thus set, our feisty compatriot next turns on the British for their "clamour of pedantry in favour of Greek and Latin . . . and the modern French and Italian, . . . while a grammatical study of their own language, has, till very lately, been totally neglected". He deplores the dearth of rules that govern our language, and the abundant corruptions allowed through ignorance and caprice. Since the "principal part of instructors are illiterate people", standards must be set up to prevent the perpetual fluctuation of American English. By page six of the first volume we realize that here is a very angry man, who intends to speak out "with that plainness that is due to truth". Mr. Webster now levels his sights at a certain deficient Mr. Dilworth—who, though he pronounces his "t" in "whistle" and his "b" in "subtle", has somehow managed to sell his acclaimed *New Guide* to American school children—and pulls the trigger. *A New Guide to the English Tongue,* we are told, abounds in gross error. Who, in America, needs a detailed list of British towns and boroughs with instruction for pronunciation (E″ver-shot, O″ving-ham, Tow-ce″ster)? or to be wrongly shown a double accent mark after short-voweled syllables of words ("clus″ter", instead of "clu-ster")? Now that Mr. Webster has entered the fray, children in all the states and counties of America may rejoice to have workable word divisions upon which to base their pronunciations. Away with Dilworthian nonsense! Let words be divided as they ought to be pronounced. Mr. Webster ends his introductory diatribe with an exhortation to readers not to be frightened at the novelty of his ideas:[55]

55. Webster, *Grammatical Institute,* 1:13. Thomas Dilworth's *A New Guide to the English Tongue* was first published in England in 1740, though no copy exists now before the fifth edition of 1744. Because of the simplicity of its fare and the no-nonsense delivery, it became the most popular and most frequently reprinted of the

Frontispiece to Thomas Dilworth's *A New Guide to the English Tongue,* 96th ed. (Burlington, N.J.: Isaac Collins, 1774). This is the only recorded copy of this handy, popular, and obviously much-used edition. Courtesy of the Syracuse University Library.

> Those who rail so much at *new things* ought to consider, that every improvement in life was once *new;* the reformation by Luther was once *new;* the Christian religion was once *new;* nay their favourite Dilworth was once a *new thing:* And had *these* and other *new things* never been introduced, we should have all, this moment, been pagans and savages.

And bumpkins. Like Dilworth. Here endeth the apology for the first book of the *Institute.* The author now focuses his cooling passion on the problems of orthography.

In the introduction to *Part II* (1784), though a whole year has intervened, he is still after poor Dilworth, calling his book "A mere Latin Grammar, very indifferently translated". Webster is particularly annoyed at Dilworth's following along in the classic path of forcing English into Latin molds. The stupidity of trying to teach the English tongue through a system of rules that are totally irrelevant to it comes straight from England, and that it should still have advocates "can be resolved into no cause but the amazing influence of habit upon the human mind".[56] He praises both Lowth and Buchanan for understanding the genius of the language and for their judicious remarks on matters of sentence construction. But arriving at the verbs, he discovers them both "exceedingly defective". Nevertheless, his tone has mellowed. He refers to these predecessors with respect, and where he must part company with them, he does so with reluctance and "the fullest persuasion that I was warranted [so

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many school spelling books produced in England during the eighteenth century. Its success in America was equally impressive. In total, the more than one hundred editions of it printed before 1800 are estimated to have produced some million and a half copies. To give an idea of its archaic flavor: Mr. Dilworth instructs his pupils on the handling of the points as follows: for comma, say One; for semicolon (described in terms of "middle breathing between comma and colon"), say One, One; for colon, say One, One, One; for period, say One, One, One, One (*New Guide,* 13th ed. [London: Henry Kent, 1751; reprint, Menston, England: Scolar Press, 1967], 92–94). Mr. Webster is merely being rather nasty when he says that Mr. D. pronounced his "t" in "whistle" and his "b" in "subtle". What Mr. Dilworth actually says (86–87) is: "*T* is sounded like *s,* in *Whistle,* and *b* is sounded like *t,* in *Subtil*", a statement that would more fairly be viewed as a teaching ploy than the barbarism that Webster implies that it is.

56. Webster, *Grammatical Institute,* 2:3.

to do] by the nature and idiom of the language". His goal is "to throw the principles of our language into a style and method suited to the most ordinary [Dilworthian?] capacities". Thereupon, he launches into a catechetical treatment of the parts of speech, the largest section having to do with verbs and all the succinct modes and auxiliaries that so refine meaning for us and baffle the foreigner. He handles it all with clarity and directness, adding at the end a parsing praxis about the virtues of educated women. (Praxes are often about women; but the idea of educating them makes a pleasant change.) If men could only stop degrading themselves in order to please women, this one reads, "the two sexes, instead of corrupting each other, would be rivals in the race of virtue". This delightful idea is then analyzed in the following way:[57]

in	A preposition.
the	As before.
race	A noun, singular, governed of *in*, by rule 11 [which reads, "Prepositions govern an objective case or word"].
of	As before.
virtue	A noun singular, governed by *of*, by rule 11.

With all this tucked under our caps, we can now direct our gaze towards punctuation.

Although Mr. Webster has taken pains to praise clarity, not only by comment but by his own example, he is not up to fresh excitements in the field of punctuation. Instead, he offers an abridgement of Bishop Lowth's essay on the subject. This two-page précis arrives on our laps, reduced by a ratio of seven to one—scarcely the weight of a feather. The borrowing author has deleted obscurity by deleting text (often a good way) and then clinched his point with an excellent praxis using quotations from literature. In these he assesses the groupings of words and categorizes them in terms of their importance within the sentence so that appropriate punctuation can be applied to bring out their relationships, and hence their meanings. As terseness appears to be his brief, nothing conceptually revelatory is pre-

57. Webster, *Grammatical Institute*, 2:88, 94.

sented, barring a grant to the parenthesis sign of a "pause greater than a comma".[58]

Part II of the *Grammatical Institute* failed to equal the popular success of his Part I. Part III (1800) is essentially a gathering of readings—the selections for which, Mr. Webster was especially "attentive to the political interest of America". Before beginning his patriotic mission, however, he grinds out a few general directions about elocution in general, and among these few pages we find a rule for the "Pauses and Stops":[59]

> The characters we use as stops are extremely arbitrary; and do not always mark a suspension of the voice. On the contrary, they are often employed to separate the several members of a period, and show the grammatical construction. Nor when they are designed to mark pauses, do they always determine the length of those pauses; for this depends much on the sense and nature of the subject. A semicolon, for example, requires a longer pause in a grave discourse, than in a lively and spirited declamation.

Along the way we are also advised that when quipping upon the podium, we must open our mouths, crisp our noses, lessen the aperture of our eyes, and shake our whole frames. Such clues will conduct an audience to the wanted response.

Five years after the publication of Part II of his practical *Institute* handbooks, and showing yet no signs of fatigue or confusion, Mr.

58. The contemptible Dilworth, meanwhile, had written a four-page catechism on the subject of punctuation, all formidably archaic in its assignments of middle breathing and long breathing to semicolon and colon. However, most interestingly, he includes a few lines under the heading "Of Books", wherein he defines segments that should interest the punctator. Chapters, for example, "contain the principal Heads, Subject, or Argument of a *Book*". Paragraphs, we are told, "are certain large Members or Divisions of a *Chapter*, or of a *Section*; containing a perfect Sense of the Subject treated of, and calculated for the Advantage of the *Reader*; because at the End thereof he may make a larger Pause than usual at the End of a *Period*". See Dilworth, *New Guide*, 92–96.

59. Noah Webster, *An American Selection of Lessons in Reading and Speaking, being The Third Part of a Grammatical Institute of the English Language*, 15th ed. (Hartford: Hudson and Goodwin, 1800), 3.

Webster came out with a longer, more philosophical treatise, a collection of lectures entitled *Dissertations on the English Language* (1789),[60] to which, delightfully, he appends not only his own essay in favor of "rendering the orthography of words correspondent to the pronunciation", but also Benjamin Franklin's defensive response. The book is a register of Mr. Webster's growth of opinion and confidence. He is now critical of both Bishop Lowth and Dr. Johnson (to whom in less presumptuous years he had paid tribute, but whose pedantry he now finds to have "corrupted the purity of our language"). Within these self-assured pages we are told that Edward Gibbon was too elaborate in his diction. His *Decline and Fall* might better have been titled: "A Display of Words". Mr. Webster's acerbic tongue is still active, though it has nothing new to say about our favorite topic.

In his fifth dissertation, which deals with prosody and the construction of verse, he speaks briefly about punctuation in verse. He tells us that poetry has two kinds of pauses: the caesural pause and the final pause, both of which are to be considered musical, "for their sole end is the melody of verse". The ends of lines are understood to induce a break, whether there is a pause in the sense or not. Thus, St. Jerome's *per cola et commata* method (see Part One), somewhat misapplied, lingers on. But there are also, says Webster, sentential pauses (for sense) that fall within the framework of poetry, and these are the same as are used for prose, i.e., the comma, the semicolon, the colon, and the period. They, too, indicate the need for a brief silence. Adherence to this Websterian prescription, which was a standard one for his times, would appear to bring on more pauses than verse. But in those days, there was always plenty of time.

JOSEPH ROBERTSON

By the 1780s punctuation had been thoroughly accepted as a subject worthy of intellectual exertion, and its practicalities and shortcomings were enthusiastically discussed by the sophisticates, if not quite understood by the rabble. Joseph Robertson in his *Essay on Punctuation* (1785), the earliest systematic (*pace* Burrow) survey of English punctuation, sums up the norm for the era. In this popular

60. Noah Webster, *Dissertations on the English Language* (Boston: Isaiah Thomas, 1789), xi, and 299–300.

book, which was reprinted frequently both in England and in America, the punctating art is proclaimed to be of "infinite consequence in writing; as it contributes to the perspicuity, and consequently to the beauty, of every composition". With this remark we have reached, in some sense, a plateau. After centuries of beauty being anything but clarity (an attitude with overtones not very respectful of human thinking), the mind is at last pronounced pure, and a clear view of its contents deemed a desirable goal in writing.

Mr. Robertson is aware of the inefficiency of a single style of punctuation in guiding both eye and tongue-ear around the pitfalls of text. Following Walker, he touches upon the irony that even the pointed divisions of compounded sentences do not exactly coincide with the needs of the speaking reader, since "many pauses are necessary in reading, where no point is inserted by the printer". In the manner of Thomas Sheridan he forestalls *viva voce* error in his own works by comma-ing off every conceivable word group, and thereby manages to yoke syntactical-visual and rhetorical-aural needs.

After a short historical discourse to account for the development of the puncts, he notes that "all European writers" of his time make use of the marks of division, of which there are now a full-fledged eight. To the four major stops, the interrogation and exclamation marks, he has added both the parenthesis and dash.[61] That settled, he proceeds to analyse them all with scientific fervor, describing and giving examples. His book ends with an appendix discussion of useful textual marks (carets, apostrophes, etc.) and abbreviations.

Having first suggested that examination of the structure of a compound sentence will discover the spots where the stops and pauses must lie, he turns his attention to the comma, for which he bravely develops forty rules. Thirty-eight of these are unprecedentedly rooted in syntax; the last two succumb to the problems of breathing. We forgive him for this, for where the demands of respiration or 'good taste' do not intervene, he is definitely a syntax man, and one experiences a number of insights in reading his handy, rational treatise. Throughout the sweep of his *Essay,* he endeavors to muster good reasons for this or that recommendation—something not many of his fellow pedagogues were thoughtful enough to do. For instance, he tells us (whether right or wrong, at least it is something to chew on)

61. Joseph Robertson, *An Essay on Punctuation* (London: J. Walter, 1785), 19.

ADVERTISEMENT.

"YOUNG people ſhould be early taught to diſtinguiſh the ſtops, commas, accents, and other gramatical marks, in which the correctneſs of writing conſiſts; and it would be proper to begin with explaining to them their nature and uſe *."

* ROLLIN on the Belles Letters, b. i. c. 1.

The Advertisement, title page verso, from the first American edition of Joseph Robertson's *An Essay on Punctuation* (Philadelphia: Printed by Joseph James, 1789). Courtesy of the Syracuse University Library.

why three or more substantives together should be separated by commas. It is, commonsensically, because each word exhibits a distinct picture, which is better served by being "distinguished from the rest in writing and reading, as it is in nature".[62]

Mr. Robertson is quite verbose about the 'clause', a term that he applies to segments of a sentence that may or may not contain a verb. Although his explanation assumes the favored laboratory precision, we can see how he is not yet fully conditioned to reasoning out some of the applications that he urges upon us. "A participle, with a clause depending on it, is generally separated from the rest of the sentence by a comma", he says. To the modern reader, expecting quite another incarnation, the offered example is not helpful. "The fear of death is one of the strongest passions, *implanted* in human nature." If there is to be any syntactical justification whatsoever for the separating of "passions" from "implanted", it must be to alert the reader to the writer's special intention of uniting "fear of death", and "fear of death" only, with the final "implanted" phrase.[63] The positioning of the comma as it is here, with the established relationship making no sense, is extremely disconcerting.

The Robertsonian semicolon is our old familiar semicolon—a little more demanding of perfection than the comma, and a little less squeamish than the colon. Mr. Robertson rather plumes himself on the aphoristic astuteness of his examples. If not always memorable for guiding the punct to its proper seat, they do at least help us through life's little predicaments. For the semicolon he offers: "Loquacity storms the ear; but modesty gains the affections". True, too true. For the colon, described as being followed by "some additional remark or illustration, naturally arising from the foregoing member, and immediately depending on it in sense though not in syntax", we are presented with: "Rebuke thy son in private: public reproof hardens the heart".[64] Thus, the punctator proceeds through the book, basket in hand, gathering up the various punctuational fungi as well as a few sticks and stones to throw at Life Itself. If not too distracted by all the advisements for seemly behavior, he may notice with some satisfaction that the idea of the semicolon marking contrasting ideas

62. Ibid., 24. See also Honan, "English Punctuation Theory", 96.
63. Robertson, *Punctuation*, 39–40.
64. Ibid., 72, 78.

linked by a conjunction that signals a dependence (for example, "but") is enduring the tests of time. The resumptive nature of the colon, first fully discussed and illustrated by Aldus Manutius II, has also weathered the centuries.

Mr. Robertson does not develop his reasons for lowercasing all the capital letters that the sight of a noun induced into the texts of his forebears, just as his forebears did not develop their reasons for having put them there in the first place.[65] As for the use of quotation marks, he does not have anything very specific to say either. However, he strongly urges against the constant use of the parenthesis, a ploy so popular in his times. The elegant writer, he advises, will endeavor (must endeavor!) to avoid it.

Mr. Robertson presents a full statement, however, on the now highly popular dash. "The dash is frequently used by hasty and incoherent writers, in a very capricious and arbitrary manner, instead of the regular point." The proper use of the dash is "where the sentence breaks abruptly; where the sense is suspended; where a significant pause is required; or where there is an unexpected turn in the sentiment".[66] No wonder this delightful device was so much in evidence. Indeed, all these uses are valid today.

DAVID STEEL

Punctuation was now a topic of general relevance and a good ground for the exercise of gentlemanly wits and for that warm after-glow associated with published authorship. Earnestness abounded, and in the quick turnaround of a single year we find Mr. Robertson meeting his comeuppance. For though he had made more progress in elucidating the doctrine of points than anyone before had attempted, David Steel, printer and writer on naval history and engineering, regretfully discovered not a few defects in the rigging of Robertson's rules. Mr.

65. Simeon Daines, who makes several pages of announcements on the topic, is no exception. He discusses the standard uses of the capital to begin "every sentence, or clause", proper and geographical names, titles, etc.; but alas, while his own remarks on the subject are being put here and there into caps by his printer, no rationale is discussed. See Daines' *Orthoepia* (London: Printed by Robert Young and Richard Badger for the Company of Stationers, 1640; reprint, Menston, England: Scolar Press, 1967), 76–77.

66. Robertson, *Punctuation*, 129.

Steel's *Elements of Punctuation* (1786) begins its courtly attack by reproducing Robertson's entire *Essay* on the verso and addressing particular, 'not quite right' elements of it on the recto of each matching page. The tone of Steel's commentary is throughout wellbred and self-effacing. "I rather think . . ." he observes quietly. "It seems better that . . ." To Robertson's rejection of additional pointing around the parentheses, our mild new friend prefers to think that a parenthesis should be indicative only of a drop in voice:[67]

> I confess myself to be one of those who contend that a parenthesis demands every point which the sense would require, if the parenthesis were omitted, except when the parenthesis is interrogative, or exclamatory.

He continues in this pleasant, abstracted way to move us all towards a proper reverence for the connections between subjects and verbs, verbs and objects, relatives and antecedents, though how we are to do it remains rather mysterious: "A nice acquaintance with punctuation" being unattainable by rules and procured only "by a kind of internal conviction" that grammar must never be violated. Whenever Mr. Steel himself felt doubtful if the sentence would "admit a comma", he generally ended his hesitation "by inserting it, provided it do not militate against grammar". The enthusiasm of both Robertson and Steel for the comma generated a huge wave of admiration for the supposed elegance it lent to text. By 1800, and until printerly fatigue put an end to it, the comma was profusely, feverishly, and often fancifully sprinkled over the printed page. As for the colon and semicolon, Mr. Steel was against their intervening in a grammatical construction. Their purpose is to mark the degree of the connection, he felt, and that, it turns out, is a thing which can be variously felt by different people.[68]

67. David Steel, *Elements of Punctuation* (London: Printed for the Author, 1786), 126. This delightful respite from Mr. Steel's other bibliographic entries in the *British Museum Catalogue*, all of which expound naval practicalities and bear titles such as *Seamanship, The Ship-Master's Assistant, Steel's Elements of Mastmaking,* and *Sailmaking and Rigging,* offers useful proof of punctuation's pervasive and magnetic charm.

68. Steel, *Elements,* 32–34. See also Honan, "English Punctuation Theory", 97.

> Punctuation should lead to the sense; the sense will guide to modulation and emphasis. When punctuation performs its office thus, it will point out likewise the grammatical construction; for the sense of a passage and its grammatical construction are inseparable.

With this statement we see Lowth's circle opening up. Though grammar is too subtle to be usefully represented even by copious rules, it is there, definitely alive in the human mind, and punctuation *must* tango with it. A clear pronunciation, which is naturally guided by a knowledge of the grammatical basics, will follow the contours of syntactical patterns with or without Robertson's forty rules for the comma. In repeated editions, Steel's positive pro-grammar stance will influence the doings of language analysis for the next fifty years. His polite adjustments to Robertsonian decree represent the closest that the eighteenth century came to destroying the classical concept of punctuation as a guide to oral expression.

To demonstrate how he would do it, Mr. Steel seizes upon a variety of complicated sentences from literature (of which there suddenly seem to be myriads) and proceeds to punctuate them. For example, from David Hume's *English History* he selects the sentence: "To deny the reality of the plot was to be an accomplice; to hesitate was criminal: royalist, republican, churchman, secretary, courtier, patriot, all parties concurred in the delusion".[69] The comment, in footnote beneath (Mr. Steel's unaggressive format) was:

> In the edition of Hume, 1782, I find this passage pointed thus: "royalist, republican; churchman, secretary; courtier, patriot; all parties concurred in the delusion." This method . . . undoubtedly marks the antitheses, by separating them with semi-colons, but it leads from grammatical construction. . . . Nouns royalist, republican, etc. are all nominative to verb concurred and should not be so disconnected from it.

In the final ten or so pages of offered rules for punctuating English text (this, in exact imitation of Robertson), we are invited to check

69. Steel, *Elements*, 51.

worrisome uncertainties against the Latin, to seek out the prepositional and gerundival sources of English expression that will qualify us to plant our points with greater assurance.

LINDLEY MURRAY

Lindley Murray's *English Grammar,* first published in 1795, was far and away the most popular and frequently reprinted grammar during the nineteenth century. Its some three hundred editions were as popular in England, where Murray passed the latter half of his life, as in his native America. Drawing heavily on previous grammars, particularly that of Bishop Lowth, his book seemed to bring to culmination the art for all men. Mr. Murray himself showed no ambition to do battle with the insights of his predecessors. Instead of stirring up new quarrels, he wisely sidestepped the bogs where controversy had already sucked so many under. He seemed content with his role as explicator par excellence.[70]

> Little can be expected from a new compilation, besides a careful selection of the most useful matter, and some degree of improvement in the mode of adapting it to the understanding, and the gradual progress of learners. . . . The compiler of this work, at the same time that he has endeavoured to avoid a plan, either too concise or too extensive, has studied to render his subject sufficiently easy, intelligible, . . . comprehensive, . . . and best adapted to young minds.

With a goal so worthy and so lucidly set forth, we are not surprised to learn of his enormous success. His audience was ready and the material developed; it was a matter of moving in to coordinate the two and seize the prize. Clarity and restraint are Mr. Murray's very special virtues. He is courteous from head to toe. Phrasing his rules with simple and memorizable directness, he invites us onto the field of orthography, etymology, syntax, and prosody (the so-called four parts to grammar) with the air of a host: 'There they are, please help yourself'. The ruler-rapping, battle-commander grammarian has

70. Lindley Murray, *English Grammar* (York: Wilson, Spence, and Mawman, 1795), iii and iv.

transmogrified into the gentlest of gentleman teachers, and life in the classroom is at last bearable, if not quite yet the 'fun' that it is today. Mr. Murray's reasonable tone, his middle-class and pedagogical (as opposed to aristocratic and philosophical) assuredness is prophetic of nineteenth-century attitudes. Each given rule is followed by samples and explanations. In a book of only two hundred twenty pages, the author devotes nearly seventeen to the matter of punctuation and textual marks and another dozen or so in the appendix to matters of lucidity and precision.

Mr. Murray's opening lines on punctuation tell us that reading aloud was still crucially important to the society in which he expected his book to hold sway. Punctuation, in such an atmosphere, was quite adequately described as being:[71]

> the art of dividing a written composition into sentences, or parts of sentences, by points or stops, for the purpose of marking the different pauses which the sense, and an accurate pronunciation [in that order], require.

Mr. Murray is being slippery here. Like Lowth, he has encircled with a single fling of his net the dual duties of the overburdened punct. Using the word "pause" for both visual and oral stops, he simply slides away from the complications that so transfixed Mr. Walker, and keeps himself more or less immune to philosophical problems by failing to mention that there might be some. Having described, for example, a simple sentence as one where, in general, "no points are requisite", he then tells us that if it is lengthened by adjuncts inseparable to the subject (he calls it "nominative case" and does not say how long those inseparable adjuncts can be), then a "pause" (indicated by a comma) may be admitted immediately before the verb. Such a way of dealing with the grammatical specifics betrays an uninquiring audience. Clearly, the author is not engaged in debating minutiae with fellow philosophers, but in straightening out, as best he can, the season's cull of deficients. Although Mr. Murray does not specifically say so, he suggests that it is the length of sentences that must have the preponderant vote in deciding the use of

71. Murray, *English Grammar*, 159.

the comma. Whether that has to do with physiological requirements is not touched upon, for this is a book of action, not theory, and where the two cannot agree, silence is destined to prevail.

There are nineteen rules for the comma in the *English Grammar,* each succinctly stated and followed by brief commentary with example. Let us listen to what is being said about comma-ing off the relative pronoun:[72]

> RULE XV. Relative pronouns are connective words, and generally admit a comma before them; as, "He preaches sublimely, *who* lives a sober, righteous, and pious life;" "There is no charm in the female sex, *which* can supply the place of virtue."
>
> But when two members are closely connected by a relative, restraining the general notion of the antecedent to a particular sense, the comma should be omitted; as, "A man who is of a detracting spirit, will misconstrue the most innocent words that can be put together."
>
> In this example, the assertion is not of "a man in general," but of "a man who is of a detracting spirit;" and therefore they should not be separated.

The reader is urged to inspect Mr. Murray's own commas, particularly the one before "restraining".

The practical Mr. Murray manifests a sensible unwillingness to propound on the "loose" sentence and its requirements for the elusive semicolon. Having assessed the likely intellects and attention spans of his audience, he simply presents a "loose" sentence without calling it anything, applies the necessary stops, and moves on to the colon. This, too, he swallows very quickly. There is no mention in his rules about the semicolon or colon demanding beats of one, two, three, etc. (though later, quite casually, he refers to interrogation and exclamation points as being "indeterminate as to quantity of time"). Sense is the measure of what is owed. And so, he reasons about the relationships from a grammatical point of view—in terms

72. Ibid., 164.

of dependency and the now generally understood incomplete/complete factor—and leaves the rhetorical reproduction to the intelligence and good taste of the reader-aloud. The assumption, as we see, was that anybody who could read what an author had written could successfully handle an oral rendition on his own, without the over-explicit, incessant, orchestral conducting that had tended in earlier years to conjure up marionettes instead of real people.

Mr. Murray touched upon some matters that had not been definitively dealt with before and did so with such expertness that we are all quite comfortable even today adhering to his suggestions. "A period may sometimes be admitted between two sentences, though they are joined by a disjunctive or copulative conjunction."[73] So he advises, *allowing* us to do what we do when we begin our sentences with a 'but' or a 'for'. Murray's statement testifies to the breaking up of the long, alembicated sentences that had clogged the texts of previous decades. Writing, as it became more common, became more natural. From a history of arch stiffness, it now sought truly to shadow the directness of speech.

Mr. Murray accepts the dash—along with the parenthesis, exclamation, and question mark—as a fully fledged stop, bringing the total to an enduring eight. He discusses the paragraph, a major instrument in the breaking up of text, and though the subject was not new to the classroom (some thanks owed here to Dilworth), he is the first popular grammarial sophisticate to promote an understanding of its characteristics. A device for dividing and subdividing text by coherence of topic is certainly relevant to logical exposition, and hence to improved comprehension.

With his splendid appendix on "Perspicuity", Mr. Murray brings our century to a close. With him, we may justly say that the latter half of the eighteenth century brought the English language into its current form, a form such that readers now are able to absorb *easily* what was written two centuries ago. For the considerable progress in language theory and the role of punctuation therein, we owe thanks to Mr. Murray and all those strong grammatical shoulders upon which he stood.

73. Murray, *English Grammar*, 168, 173–74.

Sadly, not everyone agreed that the progress made was so desirable. A strange, if not quite delightful, example of resistance to the newly accepted wisdom was the self-appointed Lord Timothy Dexter (1743–1806) of Newburyport, Massachusetts. A man of exuberance and imagination, he made his fortune by selling oddities (mittens and warming pans) in unexpected places (the West Indies) and surpassed even that in siring two children by a wife he insisted was a ghost.[74] He did not by habit withhold his opinions. His enormously popular and much derided *A Pickle for the Knowing Ones* runs along more or less as it opens, with spunky appraisals of whatever catches his eye.[75]

> To mankind at Large the time is Com at Last the grat day of Regoising what is that whye I will tell you thous three kings is Rased Rased you meane shoued know Rased on the first Royel Arch in the world olmost. . . . Whereas many philosphers has judged or guessed at many things about the world, and so on. Now I suppose I may guess as it is guessing times. I guess the world is one very large living creature, and always was and always will be without any end from everlasting to everlasting, and no end.

A lovely book, as is plain to see, but rather heartlessly received by those against whom it had been propelled, i.e., the knowing ones, who satirized his punctuation and spelling (not to mention the content) with maleficent glee. Apparently, Lord Timothy did not take well to criticism of his publications, for at the finish of the second edition (1805) of *A Pickle for the Knowing Ones,* he appended the following irate note to the printer about punctuation. In short, he was sick of it. By this time, quite wondrously eccentric, he was nobody to tangle with.[76]

74. John P. Marquand, *Lord Timothy Dexter* (New York: Minton, Balch and Co., 1925), passim.

75. Timothy Dexter, *A Pickle for the Knowing Ones; or, Plain Truths in a Homespun Dress* (Salem, Mass., Printed for the Author, 1802), 3.

76. Timothy Dexter, *A Pickle for the Knowing Ones* (Boston: Otis, Broaders and Co., 1838), 42.

fouder mister printer the Nowing ones complane of my book the fust edition had no stops I put in A nuf here and they may peper and solt it as they plese