WHAT IF ONE MAN'S LEXICON WERE ANOTHER MAN'S SYNTAX? A NEW APPROACH TO THE HISTORY OF RELATIVE *WHO*

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1. Relativizers in present-day English: a very brief survey

According to major grammars of English such as Quirk *et al.* (1985), Biber *et al.* (1999) and Huddleston and Pullum (2002), at least six different nominal relativizers are available in present-day (standard) English (PdE): *that, which, who, whose, whom* and zero. Their occurrences are constrained by a number of syntactic, stylistic and varietal factors (see Aarts 1993; Finegan – Biber 1997; Poussa 1990; Schneider 1992; Seppänen 1999; Sigley 1997; Tottie 1997; van den Eynden 1993). The most important syntactic constraints are summarized in Table 1:

Table 1: Relativization in present-day English

	Restrictiveness		Antecedent		Pied-piping	Syntactic function		
	Restrictive	Non-restrictive	Animate	In-animate		Subjective	Objective	Possessive
that	×		×	×		×	×	
which	×	×		×	×	×	×	×
who	×	×	×		×	×	×	
whose	×	×	×	×	×			×
whom	×	×	×		×		×	
zero	×		×	×			×	

Table 1 shows that all relativizers, no matter whether they should be treated as pronouns, particles, or both (cf. van der Auwera 1985), enter into some sort of paradigm, i.e. a system with a fixed number of coordinates or dimensions that regulate the use of a fixed number of items.

The question that lies at the heart of this paper is how this system has evolved. *Wh*-relativizers have not always been part of the picture, but have developed gradually only during the Middle English period, i.e. the time between 1100-1500 (see Curme 1912; Geoghegan 1975; Fischer 1992; Ball 1996; Dekeyser 1997). *Who* is particularly interesting in this respect. It was the last to emerge, arguably in the fifteenth century, and it was still 'unsettled' in the seventeenth (see Meier 1967, Fischer 1992: 301, Kivimaa 1966, Rydén 1966, 1983). In order to bridge the apparent gap between a syntactic and a semantic-pragmatic-stylistic account of the origin or relative *who*, it will be argued in this paper that the introduction and spread of the *wh*-relativizers may be described as an instance of grammaticalization and/or routinization. The process as a whole was triggered by socio-pragmatic factors such as expressivity or extravagance (see Haspelmath 1999: 1057, Hopper – Traugott 1993: 65, Detges 2001, 2002),

promoted by hearer as well as speaker-based reanalysis (cf. Kuteva 2001), and reinforced by independent parallel syntactic developments.

2. The development of PdE relativization

The story of the development of relativization is commonly told from two different, though somehow related points of view: a syntactic one and a semantic-pragmatic-stylistic one.

2.1. The syntactic point of view

From a syntactic point of view, the so-called *wh*-relativizers seem to have emerged through indirect questions or following verbs such as *know* and *wonder*:

(1) Sage me *hwilc* word ærust forðeode of Godes muðe?
    Tell me which word first   forth went of God's mouth?

<div align="right">(Sol. I, 2.1; quoted from Fischer 1992)</div>

Also, the use of *wh*-words in generalizing relatives as in (2) and (3) surely had some influence on the development of the paradigm as a whole.

(2) They liked *what* he cooked = They liked *whatever* he cooked.

(3) Daþeyt *hwo* þe mete werne! 'A curse on who(ever) refuses the meat/food'

<div align="right">(Havelock 927)</div>

In Old English (OE), generalizing relatives could be formed using constructions of the type *swa hw...swa*. During the Middle English (ME) period, the first *swa* was lost and the second was replaced by *þe* and, finally, also deleted. This finally led to generalizing relatives which only contained a *wh*-word. Semantically, then, generalizing relatives are easily reinterpretable as ordinary relatives. All in all, the first 'proper' relative clauses introduced by *wh*-words cannot be found before the twelfth century; they did not become common until about two hundred years later. What is more, the *wh*-relativizers were not all introduced at the same time and at one big swoop, but rather one after the other with the chronology *which* > *whose* > *whom* > *who* (cf. Romaine 1982, Rydén 1983).

2.2. The semantic-pragmatic-stylistic point of view

The story, at least in its final stages, sounds somewhat different from a semantic-pragmatic-stylistic point of view. Several authors (Meier 1967, Steinki 1932, Curme 1912, Rydén 1983, Romaine 1982) have pointed out that *who* first occurred in the fifteenth century in a very limited number of phrases and with a very small group of antecedents, next to the equally available relativizers *which* and *that*. The most common constructions are the letter closing formulae as exemplified in (4)-(19):

(4) [...] euere gremercy God and ye, *who* euere haue you and me in his
    gracious gouernance (Paston, 1426)

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(4)   [...] euere gremercy God and ye, *who* euere haue you and me in his
        gracious gouernance (Paston, 1426)

(5) by the grace of God, *how* haue you in his blysid kepyng (Paston, 1452)

(6) with Godys grace, *who* preserue you (Paston, 1475)

(7) with the grace of God, *who* euer mote be your guyde and protectour
(Paston, 1467?)

(8) and that knoweth God, *who* have you in his blesyd kepying. (Stonor, <1431)

(9) by the grace of our Lord, *who* ever preserve and kepe yow to his plesur
(Stonor, 1476)

(10) but I trust to God all shalbe well: *who* preserve you to his pleasure
(Stonor, 1480)

(11) but I trust to Jhesu to avate on you at Nottyngham with my servyce: *who* ever have you in hys blyssyd kepeng (Stonor, 1482?)

(12) that knowys God, *who* kep you (Cely, 1478)

(13) by the grasse of God, *ho* have you in his kepyng (Cely, 1478)

(14) in þe reuerens of owr Ladye, *who* preserue yow body and sowle
(Cely, 1481/82)

(15) blissid be Jhesu, *who* preserue yow (Cely, 1481/82)

(16) I pray allmyghty Jhesu amend hytt, *whoo* euyr preserue yow (Cely, 1487/88)

(17) with the grace of Jesu, *who* your mastership preserve (Plumpton, 1483)

(18) with Godes grace, *who* kepe you and your lovers evermore
(Plumpton, 1486)

(19) by the grace of Jesu, *who* send you shortly a good end in your matters
(Plumpton, 1504)

(all examples quoted from Rydén 1983: 127)

Obviously, these first occurrences of relative *who* have very little to do with indirect questions and generalizing relatives, and can hardly be explained from the syntactic point of view outlined above. Instead, as will be argued in the following, they are motivated by cognitive, socio-psychological and pragmatic factors such as expressivity and extravagance. It is only later that they are integrated into the language system proper through some grammaticalization process. The details and background of this process will be the topic of the following section. Also, it will be shown that the argument of 'paradigmatic pressure' is misleading in this case. The question of how the two complexes of syntax and semantics-pragmatics may be (re-)united will be discussed in the final section of this paper.

2.3. The emergence of relative who *due to markedness agreement*

Henning Andersen suggests in his 2001 paper on markedness and the theory of linguistic change that

> in ritual, in the thematic and plot structure of texts, in lexical, grammatical, and phonological parallelism, in the grounding structure of narrative discourse, and in the regularities of morphosyntax, morphophonemics, and phonology, *syntagmatic structures are commonly formed in accordance with one and the same Principle of Markedness Agreement.*
>
> (Andersen 2001: 30, emphasis added)

This principle says, in a nutshell, that marked forms tend to be developed or used in marked environments, as for instance in American English, where vowels are commonly nasalized (i.e. 'marked') before nasal (i.e. 'marked') consonants, but may remain unmarked elsewhere. Now it can be argued that the emergence of relative *who* in the letter closing formulae and in the contexts in (4) to (19) above is primarily due to some kind of markedness agreement. The agreement takes place between a clearly marked signified (the Deity) and a new, and therefore also marked, signifier (the relativizer *who*). This agreement in markedness may have been motivated by the need for expressiveness and socially salient marking of the highest possible referent. They deity called for an innovative and yet 'respectable' new form. The respectability may have been fostered in some sense by the resemblance to corresponding Latinate constructions (cf. Romaine 1982, Blatt 1957), or through letter writing manuals (cf. Meier 1967). As regards later developments, Meier noted that seventeenth-century grammarians would have asserted "that for persons *who* was 'more proper', more 'elegant', and more dignified. The last idea seems to be recurrent in the history of *who*. Bishop Wren in 1660 was especially indignant about *which* referring to a Divine person, as in the Lord's prayer" (Meier 1967: 285). Steinki (1932: 27), however, pointed out that the introduction of relative *who* was, "sprachliche[r] Luxus" [linguistic luxury], something which was not necessitated by any structural gaps and systemic pressures, as Rydén later claimed (1983: 129f, 133). The innovation of a new formula does not *necessarily* create the need for "a new, referentially explicit and distinctly individualizing marker" (1983: 130). Also, the introduction of *who* in the formulae did not fill a gap in the paradigm, which followed different coordinates. An optional feature [+deity] is not a grammatical feature, a coordinate in a proper (Middle) English paradigm. Thus, the gap, apart maybe from some very superficial morphonological or phonaesthetic resemblance of forms, remained. And so the 'need' was not, I maintain, a structural one or even due to some impersonal 'systemic pressure'. Rather, what can be assumed are 'functional', pragmatic, socio-psychological (perhaps even universal?) motivations or maxims (cf. Keller 1994) to be expressive or extravagant, and thus to follow what has just been described as the principle of markedness agreement. Hopper and Traugott have summarized this similarly in claiming that "new and innovative ways of saying things are brought about by speakers seeking to enhance expressivity" (Hopper – Traugott 1993: 65). The need to be expressive or extravagant, however, may be regarded as a feature of utterances or performance, not grammars.

Granted that markedness agreement was indeed one source for relative *who*, it must now be asked how the development from utterance-based to syntactically constrained *who* may be envisioned. Language change has often been described as markedness

reduction or a 'wearing off' through use in time and according to some complex integral of function and frequency (cf. Haspelmath 1998: 53f, Bybee – Hopper 2001, Croft 2000). This also applies to the new relative *who*:

Table 2: Markedness reduction in relative *who* (adapted from Bergs – Stein 2001)

Stage	Process	Examples
A	Most marked contexts trigger most marked forms	God, saints, and other religious entities trigger *who*
B	Fossilization of stage A	Generalization of the formulae, e.g. "God, who keep you..."
C	Further loss of saliency; expansion of the range of possible antecedents	Noblemen, good friends, admired people, and worthies trigger *who*
D	Further relaxation of constraints; constraints become more grammatical and abstract (= 'grammaticalization')	[+human] triggers *who*
E	Further relaxation and generalization	[+animate] triggers *who*

(left margin, vertical: REDUCTION OF MARKEDNESS ↓)

After it had been used as an optional, salient, socially expressive marker denoting God, Jesus, a decedent or equally marked referents, it began to wear off and lose this marked status. It was generalized in the formulae; the formulae in turn lost their original meaning (compare: *God be with you* > *Goodbye* > *Bye*). At the same time, the use of *who* was broadened, its social value spread from deities to good friends, noblemen, worthies, etc. Finally, following some further markedness reduction and loss of saliency, *who* is now generalized for human, i.e. animate antecedents and increasingly also for pets and the like (see Table 2). This development with its subtle shifts in meaning and use is, of course, quite difficult to document. Certain diagnostics are available, though:

A.   The formula may be suddenly interrupted, i.e. it may be incomplete or finished with "&c."

(20)   And that God knows, *how* perserue (*Cely Letters*, Harold Stawntoyn)

(21)   I schall sende yow tydyng of othere thyngys in haste, wyth the grace of God, *who* &c. (Paston, 1468)

B.   Some instances of 'case attraction' or unexpected morphosyntactic marking may occur:

(22)   By þe grace of God, *whom* haue yow in hys kepyng (Paston, 1478)
(23)   By godes grace, *whome* have you in his keyng (Stonor, 1479)

Rydén attributes these cases to the "lack of feeling for the novel *who: whom* opposition" (1983: 127) and similarity to constructions like (24):

(24) by the grace of God, *whom* I beseche mak you good (Paston, 1467)

However, we only find errors with *whom*, never with *who*. Also, there is no reason why the use of *whom* may not be due to carelessness with a somehow worn-out phrase.

C.   Finally, the relative clause may be separated from the antecedent, as in (25) or (26), which may indicate that the relative clause only served as an afterthought, added for decorum or such, and that it is no longer intended as a genuine, heart-felt expression.

(25) Wyth the grace [of] God hyt schall not be long erst, *who* hath yow yn hys kepyng (William Cely, 1479)

(26) And that God knows, *how* perserue (*Cely Letters*, Harold Stawntoyn)

From what has been said so far it may appear that this development was solely caused by *speaker-related factors*. However, the wear and tear of this new relativizer *who* was based on both speaker and hearer processes. It was speaker-based in so far as speakers first produced these forms in order to be extravagant and expressive and to create the markedness agreement between *who* and the cognitively and conventionally marked antecedent, *God*. This construction was then subject to possible re-interpretations on two different sides. Speakers may have (consciously and purposefully) re-interpreted the structure and started using *who* with socially and cognitively salient antecedents other than the Deity, for instance in order to flatter or elevate one particular person. With this, the form already started going down the markedness cline shown in Table 2. Hearers, on the other hand, also played an important role. If they were not familiar with the conventions of letter-writing and polite, careful language use, they may not have interpreted the markedness agreement correctly or, perhaps, may not even have noticed it. In using the new form themselves, they may then have (unconsciously) changed its former intended use. The latter mechanism is also in accordance with Romaine's (1982) findings. Here it was shown that the introduction of the *wh*-relativizers in Middle Scots was a change from above. Propagation 'down the social hierarchy' might have led to certain 'misinterpretations', i.e. reanalyses. Note also that both pathways, hearer as well as speaker-based reinterpretation, led to what Croft termed 'altered replication', i.e. language change due to the fact that the form-function mapping often cannot and need not be copied perfectly (Croft 2000). The speaker-hearer analysis may be visualized in a simplified form as in Figure 1:

	Deity	Worthy Person	⁺Human	Animate
Speaker 1	+			
Hearer 1 = >Speaker 2	+			
Hearer 2 = >Speaker 3	+	+		
Hearer 3 = >Speaker 4	+	+	+	

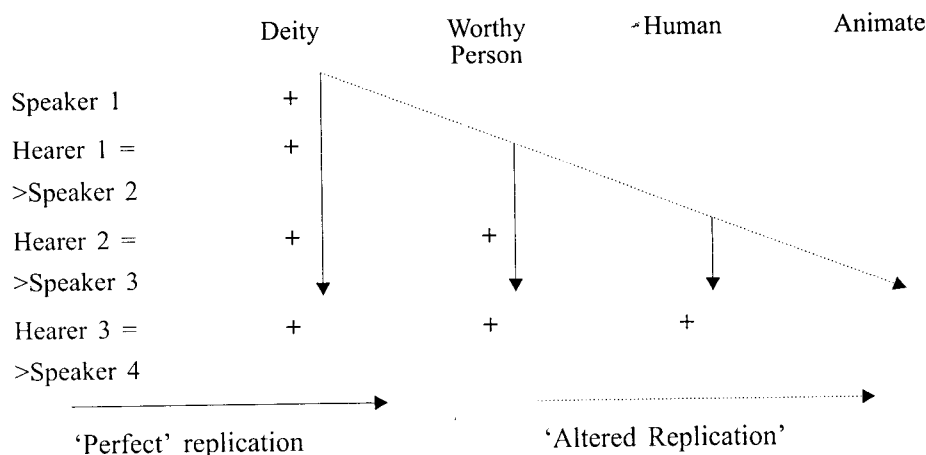'Perfect' replication   'Altered Replication'

Figure 1. Processes of speaker-hearer reanalysis of relative *who*

The vertical, unbroken lines in Fig. 1 represent unaltered, 'perfect' replication, i.e. hearers imitate the speakers' 'grammar' without changing it. The diagonal, broken lines represent 'altered' replication, i.e. hearers modify what they have heard, e.g. by adding or deleting a certain rule or factor. Note, however, that the 'correct', unaltered production of surface forms does not *necessarily* indicate unchanged underlying structures and vice versa. Even modified underlying structures might produce only unmodified forms, for whatever reason (cf. Haspelmath 1998). The reasons for altered replication, i.e. reanalysis in the traditional sense, are manifold, as has been pointed above. Speakers may reanalyze a structure in order to be expressive, to accommodate, to flatter and elevate an interlocutor etc. Hearers may reanalyze because of miscommunication or lack of encyclopedic knowledge. Both groups of factors, though conceptually different, may overlap, of course, since every speaker is also a hearer. It should also be added at this point that the reanalysis process sketched in Fig. 1 above, where semantic features are progressively added (or rather one strong feature is progressively bleached), is an analogy to what has been described for certain sound changes. With some sound changes, such as assimilation or epenthesis, distinctive phonetic features are preferably switched ('turned on and off') gradually, one by one, and not all at a time. This can be nicely illustrated with the change from OE *þunrian* to *þundrian* 'thunder' (presented in Hock – Joseph 1996: 132f). The original pronunciation involved the switching of three features during the transition from [n] to [r]:

$$[n] \begin{bmatrix} +\text{stop} & -\text{stop} \\ +\text{nasal} & -\text{nasal} \\ -\text{liquid} & +\text{liquid} \\ +\text{dental} & +\text{dental} \\ +\text{voice} & +\text{voice} \end{bmatrix} [r]$$

With the insertion of [d], first only one feature is switched (+nasal > –nasal), and then two (+stop > –stop and –liquid > +liquid):

[n] $\begin{bmatrix} +\text{stop} \\ +\text{nasal} \\ -\text{liquid} \\ +\text{dental} \\ +\text{voice} \end{bmatrix}$ [d] $\begin{bmatrix} +\text{stop} \\ -\text{nasal} \\ -\text{liquid} \\ +\text{dental} \\ +\text{voice} \end{bmatrix}$ [r] $\begin{bmatrix} -\text{stop} \\ -\text{nasal} \\ +\text{liquid} \\ +\text{dental} \\ +\text{voice} \end{bmatrix}$

The aspiration of Bantu *tatu* 'three' to Xhosa *thathu* makes this point even clearer. Here, the insertion of [h] allows for a switching of one feature at a time (Hock – Joseph 1996: 133):

[t] $\begin{bmatrix} +\text{stop} \\ -\text{voice} \\ -\text{vowel} \end{bmatrix}$ $\begin{bmatrix} -\text{stop} \\ +\text{voice} \\ +\text{vowel} \end{bmatrix}$ [a]

[t] $\begin{bmatrix} +\text{stop} \\ -\text{voice} \\ -\text{vowel} \end{bmatrix}$ [h] $\begin{bmatrix} -\text{stop} \\ -\text{voice} \\ -\text{vowel} \end{bmatrix}$ [a] $\begin{bmatrix} -\text{stop} \\ +\text{voice} \\ +\text{vowel} \end{bmatrix}$

The change in semantic features during the reanalysis of relative *who* progresses in a similar fashion: step-wise, and not in one big leap. Apart from any *natura non facit saltum* philosophy that may underlie this process, plain and simple pragmatics also seems to play a role. In the changes described in Table 2 and Fig. 1 above, the implicatures and inferences generally allow for small steps, but not for big leaps. It's only one small step from God's greatness and worthiness to the elative use of *who* for other praiseworthy entities, such as the King. From there it is again only one natural step to infer [+human] as the triggering factor for *who*, and [+human] again can carry the inference [+animate]. A transposition from [+God] to [+animate] would require a far greater deal of (mis-)interpretation and would result in a more marked deviation from the norm (in Coserius's sense).

2.4. Data section

In this data section, some statistical evidence will be presented which underlines the development described above. The data basis is formed by the late Middle English collection of Paston Letters (ed. by Davis 1971). The Pastons were a family of the landed Norfolk gentry. Due to several lawsuits and related legal problems, many of the letters written and received by members of the family were sent to the Registrar's office and are still available today. The collection edited by Norman Davis contains letters from the years 1421-1503 with fourteen informants from three generations (four female, ten male) and roughly 250,000 words.[1]

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1   For further details on the socio-historical background, see Bergs (2002), Davis (1971, introduction) and Bennett (1995).

Table 3. Restrictiveness, relativization and animacy in the Paston Letters

	Non-restrictive				Restrictive				Total
	Animate	Inanimate	Deity	*Total*	Animate	Inanimate	Deity	*Total*	
that	38	19		57	406	812	1	1219	1276
which	88	267	2	357	44	171		215	572
who	3		27	30	1			1	31
whose	35		1	36	1			1	37
whom	36		14	50	6			6	56
The which	16	41		57	3	18		21	78
Total	217	327	44	587	461	1001	1	1463	2050

The only occurrence of *that* with a deity antecedent in the restrictive section is given in (27):

(27)   God hathe schewyd hym-selffe marvelouslye, lyke *hym þat* made all and can
        vndoo ageyn whan hym lyst [...]   (John II, 1471, no. 261)

In this very doubtful case the antecedent, strictly speaking, is not *God* but rather *him* and this sentence may indeed allow for a generalized reading: "like the person / whoever has made all...". This single instance will not be further discussed. The only occurrence of restrictive *who* is also a dubious case which is closely connected to a generalizing relative and may thus be neglected in what follows.

In the collection of letters we find corroborative evidence for the theory just outlined in the fact that twenty-seven out of thirty non-restrictive relative clauses introduced by *who* refer back to deity antecedents. One out of the three which do not is a headless relative. The two others appear quite late (after 1481), both with highly respectable human antecedents:

(28)   I beseche God, fore þe forderawnce of them as now, rewarde ȝow and þe good
        parson of Mautby, and also Mastyre Baley, *who* I wende woold not haue balkyd
        this pore loggeyng to Norwyche wardys.   (Edmond II, 1481, no. 399)

(29)   Also ther was ther an jnbacetour fro the Kynge of Schottys *who* is now put in
        grete trobyll be hys son and other of the lordys of hys londe.
                                                          (William II, 1488, no. 411)

Idiosyncratic tendencies in single speakers may also be excluded as a factor; we find *who* with deity antecedents in eleven speakers (ranging from one occurrence in William II to eight in John III).

Whose and *whom*, which probably had begun to develop about two to three hundred years earlier, are somewhat further developed and therefore much more complicated to describe. In the non-restrictive section, *whose* is used 35 times with animate antecedents and once with a deity antecedent. Of these 36 occurrences, fifteen are in fixed formulae such as (30), mostly involving God, a decedent or such:

(30)   Please it you to wete that myn awnte is dissesid, whos sowle God assoyll.
                                                          (Margaret, 1461, no. 166)

The rest are nine forms in non-formulaic contexts, but referring to highly prestigious entities and twelve forms in non-formulaic contexts without special referring functions.

Of the 56 occurrences of *whom*, 27 are in formulaic constructions involving deity entities, a decedent etc., thirteen are in non-formulaic contexts involving highly prestigious entities and sixteen are in non-formulaic contexts with unmarked referents. This indicates that these two pronouns are indeed further down the road. They no longer refer exclusively to deity antecedents but have spread into formulaic contexts where they seem to have already fossilized (stage B). In these two contexts we find most of the occurrences (42% and 48% respectively). Next come instances of stage C, where the marked pronouns refer to respected social entities, like noblemen and friends, and stage D, each with roughly 25%. Also, further syntactic factors may have played a role in their distribution; these will be discussed in the following. It seems that in most cases the occurrences of *whose-whom* were not so much triggered by factors such as syntactic function or definiteness, but rather by 'simple' semantic content (in the case of *who*) or by phrasal context. The 'triggering factors' for those cases where *whose* and *whom* are not found in phrasalized contexts are easily enumerated: they are all almost exclusively in non-restrictive, animate contexts:

Table 4: *Whose* and *whom* with non-deity antecedents in non-phrasalized contexts

	whose			whom			Total
	Non-restrictive	Restrictive	Total	Non-restrictive	Restrictive	Total	
Definite NP	4	1	5	11	1	12	17
Indefinite NP	5		5		2	2	7
Indefinite Pronoun	2		2	1		1	3
Personal Pronoun	1		1		3	3	4
Name	9		9	13		13	23
Total	*21*	*1*	*22*	*25*	*6*	*31*	*53*

As can be seen from Table 4, *whose* and *whom* mostly occur with proper names as antecedents, which accounts in part for the general preference in non-restrictive relative clauses. There also seems to be a marked difference between the use of *whose* and *whom*. While *whose* occurs in several non-restrictive relative clauses with indefinite antecedents (NPs and pronouns), *whom* occurs predominantly with definite NPs and hardly ever with indefinite items (NPs and pronouns) as antecedents. Nevertheless, we find proportionally more occurrences of *whom* in restrictive relative clauses (6 out of 31, or 19%) than of *whose* (1 out of 22, or 5%). It should be kept in mind, though, that the total number of occurrences in both cases is too low for the results to be statistically significant. What these figures show, however, is that restrictiveness need not be the decisive semantic-syntactic factor here. Rather, as we can see in the case of both *whose* and *whom*, it may well be the form class of the antecedent rather than its features. Iin both cases roughly 50% of all non-restrictive cases are due to proper names as antecedents. It should also be added that many of the other cases may be influenced by further syntactic factors. In seven out of the eleven (=63%) non-restrictive relative clauses modifying definite NPs, we find a preposition preceding the relativizer *whom*. Names, on the other hand, only have six out of thirteen cases (=46%) with fronted

prepositions. The rest is in the function of indirect (dative) objects. All of the relative clauses with personal pronouns as antecedents have fronted prepositions. Here, however, a point is reached where figures are too small to allow for any conclusions since with less than five instances, significancies are almost impossible to establish and occurrences may generally be interpreted as performance errors.

3. The development of 'who' – an instance of grammaticalization?

The introduction and spread of *who*, and maybe also of *whose* and *whom*, were intricately linked to sociopsychological and pragmatic factors in utterances, such as expressiveness and extravagance (Haspelmath 1998, 1999; Hopper – Traugott 1993: 65; Harris – Campbell 1995: 54, 72-75), and not so much due to systemic, paradigmatic pressures as has been advocated by Rydén and others. There simply was no systemic need to fill a given paradigm; and even if there was, the introduction of a relativizer for the deity certainly was not a great help. The development outlined so far, however, may be accounted for from the point of view of grammaticalization.

The origin of relative *who* was, as has been argued, a matter of performance in utterances, much like what Harris and Campbell call 'explorative expressions' or what Haspelmath sees as one way of initiating grammaticalization: "[it] starts out with individual utterances of speakers who want to be noticed and who choose a new way of saying old things. Since they can only manipulate the lexical end of the lexicon-grammar continuum, the new expression necessarily involves a lexical category" (Haspelmath 1999: 1057). But this only leads to the question of what is lexical, what is grammatical. Without going into this (see fn. 2), it seems clear that the first uses of relative *who* were, strictly speaking, non-obligatory; if present it was closely connected to the semantic feature [+deity]. Through time, this semantic feature was progressively backgrounded or faded through markedness reduction and re-interpretation on part of both speakers and hearers. It was first substituted by [+respect] and sooner or later [+human], and ultimately [+animate]:

Trigger cline: [+deity] > [+respect] > [+human] > [+animate]
　　　　　　　　GOD > WORTHY > FRIEND > HUMAN > PET > ???

This cline shows a strong resemblance to what has been described as *semantic bleaching* during grammaticalization. A more semantic-based feature is faded or bleached, loses semantic value and instead acquires some grammatical status or features. It seems intuitively clear that [+/–deity] is somehow more 'lexical' and [+/–animate] more grammatical.[2] The development also shows the typical cline from

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2　The distinction between grammatical and semantic (i.e. lexical) features is, of course, far from clear. While it is a truism that there is no universal set of grammatical features and that different languages grammaticalize different features, [+/– Deity] has never been a systematic grammatical feature of English – in contrast, for instance, to the noun classifier systems of Thai, Burmese, Shona and similar languages (see Foley 1997). [+/– animate/human], however, seems to have some more repercussions in the language structure as a whole, e.g. in pronominal agreement (cf. Jackendoff 2002:257, 289-293). Also compare Willem Levelt's dictum: "Syntax is the poor man's semantics", quoted ibid. This paper offers a slightly different point of view: "One man's lexicon is another man's syntax".

specific, individual, concrete to less specific, and more abstract (cf. Matisoff 1991: 384: "the partial effacement of a morpheme's semantic features, the stripping away of some of its *precise* content so it can be used in an *abstracter, grammatical-hardware-like* way" [emphasis added]). At the same time, the optional feature is turned into an obligatory one: in other words, the status of the construction changes from usage to grammar (if one wishes to make such a distinction). Also, this change may be described as semantic and syntactic **reanalysis**, based on pragmatic inferences. *Who* was a marker for *God* and other important entities – this naturally invites the inference, based on the communicative need to be expressive and flattering, that whoever gets 'who-ed' must also be important, noteworthy, and commanding respect. As with the development of *you/thou*, the inflationary use of *who* in such a function may have easily led to corresponding reanalyses of *who* as marker for human entities in general. And in the same vein it is also reanalysed as possible relativizer for restrictive relative clauses, with accompanying stronger integration in terms of syntax (parataxis > hypotaxis, see Harris – Campbell 1995, Ch. 10). This may have happened in speakers with the need to be expressive or even to accommodate, or in hearers when they simply did not see the pattern involved or were squarely uncooperative (cf. Detges 2001, 2002; Kuteva 2001). As a linguistic consequence, *who* is progressively integrated into the relativizer paradigm (see Table 1 above), resulting in what Lehmann called *paradigmatization*. While the [+/–deity] feature put it somewhere outside the regular paradigm, it now functions within the same coordinates as the other relativizers. Needless to say, some sort of *layering* can also be diagnosed: The former triggers are still relevant today (see Fig.1 above), though they are no longer cognitively or socially grounded. Note also the increasing frequency of the form in correspondence with its multiplying functions (cf. Fischer – Rosenbach 2000: 26f).

From a completely different point of view, the development of relative *who* was also a shift from the propositional to the textual domain, at least in a general sense. Relativizers, just like personal pronouns, are Janus-headed beasts: they function as text internal anaphoric elements and, simultaneously, carry context-dependent language external reference of some sort. The first occurrences of relative *who* had a stronger propositional, i.e. referential aspect. Rydén has pointed out that *who* was, in its baby-years, occasionally replaced by a normal personal pronoun, resulting in a more paratactic construction:

(31) by the grace of Jesu, He preserve you (Paston, 1488/94)

(32) [...] to the hool house, hom I commit to Goddes governans: he yow ever preserve by his speciall grace, Amen. (Stonor, c. 1477)

With the use of *who*, the two sentences/clauses seem to be more integrated, though the referential, propositional aspect is still strong. When this signifying aspect wears off, the textual function comes to the fore. *Who* today is less significant as a marker of animacy or human status, than as a clause connector used to create coherence and cohesion. This development is simultaneously mirrored in its move from exclusively non-restrictive relative clauses to restrictive ones, which are commonly characterized as more embedded than non-restrictive ones.

One question remains: what is the relationship between the syntactic and the semantic developments outlined in this paper? Whereas I would not go so far as to say that they have nothing to do with each other, as Rydén (1983) claimed, I would be less hesitant about Rydén's hedge to this claim, namely, that they "are at least not *immediately* associated with the indefinite (or interrogative) *who*." (1983: 132, emphasis added). As the successive stages of the development have probably supported each other, the syntactic developments and possibilities may be regarded as the structural prerequisites for *later* developments, as shown in Figure 2.
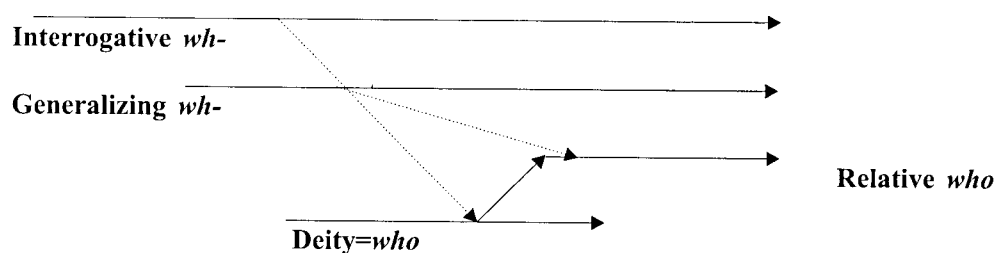
Figure 2: The Syntactic-semantic/pragmatic interplay in the development of relative *who*

The contextual expansion may have been facilitated, or even only made possible through these independent but interacting syntactic developments. In other words: while there is no reason why *who* shouldn't have simply stuck with deity antecedents and remained a linguistic luxury (although, as Steinki thinks, the 'natürliches Sprachgefühl des Volkes' [the natural language instinct of the people] would have very likely rooted out such a luxury sooner or later), the syntactic prerequisites and slots allowed for an easy extension along the pathways outlined by what we have come to know, by now, as grammaticalization.

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