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Nonrestrictive Dream

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- (12) \*One of my friends' mother broke a vase.  
 (13) \*I had an argument with one of my friends' mother.

Since this is a left-branching construction ([[one of my friends]'s mother]], one might suppose that it is its left-branching character which makes it unacceptable. But this hypothesis fails to account for the fact that equally left-branching noun phrases with *plural* head nouns are perfectly acceptable:

- (14) One of my friends' parents are coming.

Compare also:

- (15) One of my friends' (seven) sheep have escaped.  
 (16) \*One of my friends' sheep has escaped.

But it is not a question of verb agreement, since (17)

- (17) One of my friends' sheep caused a commotion.  
 should be ambiguous, but spontaneously has only the plural *sheep* reading.

Furthermore, for many people, mass nouns, which have singular verbs, are acceptable as heads:

- (18) One of his cats' fur is falling out.

Pluralia tantum, also with singular verb, succeed:

- (19) One of my friends' scissors is on the table.

For me, collectives do not succeed, regardless of verb inflection:

- (20) \*One of my friends' team is quarrelling.  
 (21) \*One of my friends' team are quarrelling.

but perhaps speakers who can accept plural verbs for collective subjects will find (21) as good as (14) or (15). Some speakers find only morphologically marked plural head noun phrases acceptable, and find, for example, that (22) is better than (23):

- (22) One of my friends' kids are coming.  
 (23) One of my friends' children are coming.

What is going on? Why should only (most) noun phrases which are semantically plural (and for some speakers, also morphologically plural) be permitted in this construction?

NONRESTRICTIVE DREAM  
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It is occasionally argued that sentences such as (1) provide evidence that nonrestrictive relative (NR) clauses must be able to come from within the complements of certain verbs.

- (1) Teddy dreamed that his college, which was in Massachusetts, was shut down by radicals.

For Jerry Morgan has observed that the NR in (1) may

say that Teddy's college is in Massachusetts in the real world, or in the world of his dreams. (1) is compatible with Teddy's college being in northern Vermont,<sup>1</sup> or with his having no college at all.

The existence of a dream-world interpretation for the NR of (1), where this NR is not necessarily true in the real world, does not show that it ever originates from within the complement of *dream*. This is revealed by (2):

- (2) Teddy dreamed that his college was closed down by radicals. Later he told one of his best friends, who had been a ringleader, about it.

(2) is compatible with the friend whom he told about the dream being an arch-conservative in the real world but a violent revolutionary in the dream world. Yet we would hardly propose to derive the NR *who had been a ringleader* in the second sentence of (2) from within the complement of *dream* in the first sentence.

So there is no reason at all to want to ever derive NR's from sources within an embedded sentence, but there is need for some principle to the effect that once one has started talking about a dream, sentences may describe the world of the dream, and not the real world.

CONJUNCTION OF REFLEXIVES:  
SYNTAX OR SEMANTICS  
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It has been claimed by Lees and Klima (1963) that absolute reflexive verbs (marked [+special]) may not be separated from their reflexive objects under conjunction:

- (1) \*John prided and absented himself.<sup>1</sup>

It is claimed that no general restriction of this sort exists for verbs which optionally take reflexive pronouns:

- (2) John cut and scratched himself.

Thus (2) would be acceptable under full conjunction reduction, while (1) would not. The acceptability of (2) is proposed by Lees and Klima as evidence that no general restriction exists for conjoining [−special] verbs.

While it is true that (1) is unacceptable, the implied analysis that its unacceptability is due to purely syntactic criteria for conjunction is misleading. Consider (3), for example:

- (3) \*John loved and pinched himself.

In (3) we have two [−special] verbs which cannot be

<sup>1</sup> Massachusetts is not in northern Vermont.

<sup>1</sup> Lees and Klima's original example, \**John excused and behaved himself*, is to be avoided, since *excuse* is not [+special]. This is shown in *Excuse me while I get a drink*.