



Bring and Come

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- c. Byron was taking liberties (with someone/something).
- d. Aubrey was making love (to/with someone).
- e. Fanny was bearing up (under something).

BRING AND COME¹
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In recent years it has been proposed that there is a class of "causative" verbs which are derived transformationally from underlying semantic complexes by predicate-raising (see McCawley 1968 and de Rijk 1968) and lexical incorporation or insertion (see Gruber 1965). One candidate for membership in this class is *bring*, which on the basis of its meaning would seem to be the "causative" of *come*. An argument which has been raised against this proposal is that despite this apparent semantic relationship, *bring* entails accompaniment, whereas *cause to come* does not; cf. (1) and (2) below.

- (1) *I brought the girl to a party which I did not go to.
- (2) I caused the girl to come to a party which I did not go to.

There are perhaps other, less difficult arguments against the causative proposal as well.

However, there is one powerful piece of evidence supporting the causative analysis of *bring*, having to do with the Verb + Particle "verbal idioms" which *bring* and *come* enter into. In my idiolect and the idiolects of all informants whom I have asked about it, every such verbal idiom of *come* has a corresponding verbal idiom with *bring*, and vice versa; moreover, the meaning of each is predictable from that of its correspondent precisely in the way we would expect if, in fact, *bring* were the "causative" of *come*. I give below a large but probably not comprehensive list of such verbal idioms and their correspondents, culled from Wood (1967), from various other reference works, and from various speakers. At the end of the paper I give a list of some idioms of other types; it somewhat complicates the situation that only some of these other idioms act as expected if this hypothesis is correct.²

¹ Essentially the same set of facts presented here have been independently discovered by Charles Fillmore (private communication) and David Perlmutter (1970). The facts presented here about *bring* and *come* are, I note in fairness to critics of the causative proposal, only imperfectly paralleled by the facts about idioms containing *send* and *go*, if at all.

² It should be kept in mind that no verbal idiom of the Verb + Particle type containing *bring* or *come* has a precise correspondent involving any verb but (respectively) *come* or *bring*. Furthermore, when a verbal idiom of this type containing one of these verbs is ambiguous the correspondent idiom is likewise ambiguous, and in precisely the same way. This is inexplicable if the hypothesis is wrong.

VERBAL IDIOMS OF THE VERB + PARTICLE TYPE

about

come about
bring about

It came about in a strange way. = "happen".

God brought it about in a strange way. = "cause to happen; accomplish".

across³**(a)round**

come around

a. *We poured water on him and he came round.* = "revive; recover; (re)awaken".

b. *He came around to our way of thinking.* = "come to agree with something".

c. *No one comes round any more to borrow money.* = "pay a visit".

bring around

a. *We brought him round by pouring water on him.* = "(a)waken (tr.); cause to revive, recover, wake up".

b. *We brought him around to our way of thinking.* = "bring into agreement with something; persuade".

c. *Salus brought us round to his College.* = "cause to visit".

at⁴**away**

come away

This damn poster won't come away from the wall. = "be removable; disengage from".

bring away

This solution will bring the putty away from the glass. = "remove; render removable; cause to be removable".

back⁵

come back

a. *The swallows came back to Capistrano.* = "return" (intr.).

b. *Shirley has come back.* = "return to health" (intr.).

bring back

a. *The thieves brought back the money.* = "return" (tr.).

b. *The medicine sure brought Shirley back.* = "return to health" (tr.).

between⁶**by**⁷

come by

= come around (c).

bring by

= bring around (c).

³ Many idioms of types other than Verb + Particle have no correspondent: thus *come across* = "meet by accident; find by chance". For most speakers *come across* = "give, do, or say what is wanted" has no correspondent either.

⁴ The expression *come at* = "approach angrily as if to attack" (probably Verb + Preposition) has no correspondent.

⁵ There is a slang idiom *come back* = "retort"; to my knowledge there is no **bring back* = "cause to retort".

⁶ *Come between* = "divide; cause estrangement among" (probably Verb + Preposition) has no correspondent **bring between*.

⁷ *Come by* = "get; acquire; gain" (not Verb + Particle) has no correspondent **bring by*.

down

come down

- a. *Man, did I come down after taking LSD!* = “be, become depressed or less euphoric”.
- b. *Bankers have come down in the world before.* = “suffer a loss in status”.
- c. *The price of eggs has not come down since 1837.* = “lessen; decrease; fall” (all intr.).

bring down

- d. *The jet came down in the DMZ.* = “fall”.
- a. *LSD sure did bring me down!* = “depress”.
- b. *Nixon’s economics has brought many a former billionaire down in the world.* = “cause to lose status”.
- c. *A recent frost has hardly brought food prices down.* = “lessen; decrease” (tr.).
- d. *The ME-109 brought the Spitfire down.* = “fell; cause to fall”.

forth

come forth

A child will come forth from her; her garden will bring forth wheat. = “be born; grow; come to be”.

bring forth

She brought forth a child and lo! her garden brought forth wheat. = “give birth to; create; cause to grow”.

in(to)⁸

come in

- a. *He came into the house.* = “enter”.
- b. *He came into a lot of money.* = “receive; get” (cf. German *bekommen* “receive”).
- c. *Horrible midi-length dresses are just now coming in.* = “come to be fashionable, usual, or popular”.

bring in

- a. *He brought a vampire into the house.* = “let or cause to enter”.
- b. *His uncle’s death brought him into great wealth.* = “cause to get; give”.
- c. *The designers are also trying to bring in maxicoats.* = “make stylish, usual, or popular”.

off

come off

- a. *My hat has come off in the wind.* = “become detached or removed”.
- b. *The Great Noodle Factory Heist has come off.* = “happen; happen successfully”.

bring off

- a. *The wind has brought off my hat.* = “remove”.⁹
- b. *The crooks brought off the Great Noodle Factory Heist.* = “accomplish; cause to happen”.

on¹⁰

come on

- a. *A migraine came on suddenly.* = “start; begin to happen”.

⁸ In *come into*, *come* is intransitive and *to* is part of a complement to-phrase; this explains why *come into* can be Verb + Particle in type, though one doesn’t get sentences such as **He came the house into*.

⁹ This usage is admittedly marginal.

¹⁰ There are various idioms *come on*, not Verb + Particle, which have no correspondents: cf. *Come on and try it!*; *Come on already!*; *Please come on, you brat!*; and so on. See also UP(ON) below.

bring on

- b. *Bob Hope came on in a silver suit.* = "appear on stage".
- a. *Nervousness brought on his migraine.* = "start (tr.); cause to start (intr.) to happen".
- b. *Bob Hope brought on a beautiful girl.* = "let or cause to appear on stage".

out

come out

- a. *It came out at the hearings that the U.S. had plans for the invasion of Canada.* = "be disclosed".
- b. *Emily Crump came out last week.* = "make one's social debut".
- c. *A new toy has come out that's great.* = "appear as a novelty; be issued or published".
- d. *From behind the curtains a pretty girl came out.* = "appear; become visible".
- e. *My filling has come out.* = "become detached or removed".
- f. *The spring flowers came out late last year.* = "bloom" (also in metaphorical senses).

bring out

- a. *The hearings brought out that the U.S. had plans for the invasion of Canada.* = "disclose; reveal".
- b. *Mr. Frump brought out his daughter in Dearborn.* = "introduce into high society as a debutante".
- c. *Gunko has brought out a great new war toy.* = "introduce, publish, issue, or cause to appear as a novelty".
- d. *By deepening the contrast, the finer details of the picture can be brought out.* = "render, make, or cause to appear or become (more) visible".
- e. *The anglers brought several big fish out of the lake.* = "remove".
- f. *The warm winter brought the flowers out early this year.* = "let or cause to bloom" (metaphoric meanings also).

over¹¹

come over

= come around (c).

bring over

= bring around (c).

through

come through

Salus came through his first year there well. = "survive; complete successfully".

bring through

Only my wife brought me through a year in Amherst. = "allow or cause to survive or complete successfully".

to

come to

a. = come around (a).

b. *The bill comes to 46 cents.* = "amounts to".

bring to

a. = bring around (a).

b. *The extra tax brings it to \$39.50.* = "cause to amount to".

¹¹ The idiom *come over* = "happen to; seize; cause to experience" has no correspondent.

under¹²
up(on)¹³
 come up

bring up

- a. *The sub came up.* = "rise, ascend".
- b. *Prices have come up badly.* = "rise; increase".
- c. *Sam has certainly come up fast.* = "gain in status".
- d. *My nice lunch came up.* = "erupt; be vomited".
- e. *The U.K. came up at lunch.* = "be mentioned".
- a. *The skipper brought the sub up.* = "raise; cause to rise or ascend".
- b. *The frost has brought food prices up.* = "increase" (tr.).
- c. *All that new money brought him up in Mary's eyes.* = "cause to gain in status; lend status to".
- d. *I brought up my lunch.* = "vomit; send out".
- e. *Don't bring up the U.K. at lunch.* = "mention".

SOME MORE IDIOMS WITH CORRESPONDENTS

come down on = "attack swiftly".
 bring down on = "cause to attack swiftly".
 come out for = "declare support for; support".
 bring out for = "cause to declare support for; cause to support".
 come to blows = "get into a fight (over something)".
 bring to blows = "cause to get into a fight (over something)".
 come to grief = "meet with misfortune or disaster".
 bring to grief = "cause to meet with misfortune or disaster".
 come up to = "reach; extend to; equal".
 bring up to = "cause to reach to; extend to (tr.); cause to equal".

SOME IDIOMS WITH NO CORRESPONDENTS

come by = "get; obtain".
 come clean = "reveal the full truth".
 come in for = "come into (b)".
 come into one's own = "receive one's due".
 come of = a. "arise from; result from".
 b. "be descended from" (more commonly *come from*).
 come off it = "stop boasting or pretending".
 come on strong = "act without subtlety, as in trying to persuade".
 come out against = "oppose; declare opposition to".
 come out with = "disclose; utter; publish".
 come over = a. "become" (British).
 b. "affect someone".
 come to hand = "be supplied; come to be available".
 come to pass = "come about".
 bring down the house = "excite great applause".

¹² The idiom *come under* = "fall into the category of" has no correspondent.

¹³ *Come upon* = *come across* is not Verb + Particle and has no correspondents. Similarly *come up on* = *come at*. Georgia Green has pointed out to me *come upon* = *come up with* = "devise; think of; think up".

bring something home
to someone
bring up

= "make one realize clearly".
= "raise (children, etc.); rear".

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