



Project  
**MUSE**®

*Scholarly journals online*

# AN AAE CAMOUFLAGE CONSTRUCTION

CHRIS COLLINS

*New York University*

SIMANIQUE MOODY

*New York University*

PAUL M. POSTAL

*New York University*

Spears 1998 discusses a use of the word *ass* in African American English (AAE) in sentences like *They done arrested her stupid ass* and *I'm gonna sue her ass*. We refer to DPs like *her stupid ass* generically as the ACC (*ass* CAMOUFLAGE CONSTRUCTION), and we view the ACC as an instance of a universal grammatical phenomenon we call CAMOUFLAGE. The ACC is also attested in non-AAE dialects of American English (Beavers & Koontz-Garboden 2006a).

For certain syntactic properties, the possessor of the ACC behaves as if it were external to the larger DP (e.g. binding, control, selection); for others, it behaves as if it were internal to the larger DP (e.g. finite verb agreement, traditional constituent-structure tests). To account for this dual behavior, we propose that the ACC possessor DP originates in a position external to the ACC, and moves into its possessor position.

We discuss the implications of our analysis for other areas of AAE syntax, including the resumptive-*with* construction, a previously undocumented grammatical phenomenon, and the use of *self* in various constructions, which we suggest are illuminated by the notion camouflage. We briefly consider arguable instances of camouflage crosslinguistically in languages such as Georgian, French, the Mayan languages K'ekchi and Tzotzil, and Yoruba. Genuine similarities between the ACC and these other constructions support our perspective on the ACC.\*

**1. INTRODUCTION.** Spears 1998 discusses a construction involving the noun *ass* in African American English (AAE), as in 1–3.

- (1) a. They done arrested her stupid ass.
- b. I'm gonna sue her ass.
- (2) Get your triflin' ass out of here. (= Get your triflin' self out of here.)  
(Spears 1998:235)
- (3) a. I saw his ass yesterday. (= I saw him yesterday.)
- b. His ass is gonna get fried. (= He is gonna get fried [reprimanded, punished].)  
(Spears 1998:235)

Spears makes the following insightful observations (1998:235):

There is also a third usage of *ass*, occurring in expressions in which it is preceded by a possessive pronoun, usually used as the equivalent of the reflexive *self*, as in example (2), but also used as a substitute for other pronouns, e.g., *him* as in example (3a), and *he* in (3b) . . . I refer to this third type of expression in which *ass* occurs as a 'metonymic pseudo-pronoun' (MPP), 'metonymic' because *ass* in its anatomical sense has been metonymically extended to stand for the whole person. I note in passing that speakers of probably all varieties of American English use some types of MPP's, for instance, Get your butt out of bed! In other varieties, though, there are not as many of them nor do they have anything approaching the broad range of use found in AAE varieties.

As Spears noted (see also Beavers & Koontz-Garboden 2006a:503), most varieties of American English use at least some instances of *ass*. We would be surprised to find anyone who rejects, for instance, either of the following.

\* We would like to express our appreciation to Judith Aissen, Judy Bernstein, Renee Blake, Yaté Davis, Samuel Epstein, Lisa Green, Norbert Hornstein, Brian Joseph, Hilda Koopman, Robert Levine, Jean-Yves Pollock, John Robert Ross, Roger Schwarzschild, Daniel Seely, John Singler, Arthur Spears, Dominique Sportiche, Sali Tagliamonte, and an anonymous referee for helpful information and/or comments that have significantly improved this article. Inadequacies and errors are entirely the responsibility of the authors. We would also like to thank audiences at the University of Michigan, the University of Maryland, the University of California at Los Angeles, and Rutgers University for their feedback. Any correspondence about this article should be sent to all three authors.

- (4) a. The Angels really kicked the Orioles' ass yesterday.  
 b. Get your ass/butt out of here.

We are concerned, however, specifically with the AAE variant, which occurs in a much wider range of contexts than its analog in other types of English. Hereafter, we refer to it as the *ASS CAMOUFLAGE CONSTRUCTION* (ACC) to indicate that the ACC is a special case of a general grammatical type we refer to as the *CAMOUFLAGE CONSTRUCTION* (see §12). Such a construction as understood here consists of a complex DP having as components a DP, which we refer to simply as the *POSSESSOR*, and a noun, which we refer to as the *MASK*.<sup>1</sup> Various modifiers may also be present. In the ACC example 1a, *her* is the possessor and *ass* is the mask. A characteristic of camouflage structures is that in contrast to ordinary possessive DPs, the truth-functionally relevant meaning of a camouflage structure is simply that of its possessor, a fact that is in effect implicit in Spears's remarks.

In order to make this article accessible to the widest possible audience, we avoid overly technical discussion framed in terms of particular frameworks like minimalism, relational grammar, HPSG, and so forth. Instead, we take an informal movement approach to the phenomenon, making the explanations technical only occasionally, when absolutely needed. A technical 'relational' approach to camouflage can be found in Johnson & Postal 1980. A technical minimalist account of the ACC is presented in Collins 2007.

The basic logic of our analysis can be summarized as follows. For certain syntactic properties, the possessor of the ACC behaves as if it were external to the larger DP (e.g. binding, control, selection). For other properties, it behaves as if it were internal to the larger DP (e.g. finite verb agreement, traditional constituent-structure tests). To account for this dual behavior, we propose that the ACC possessor DP originates in a position external to the ACC, and moves into its possessor position.

Our work has a number of theoretical implications. First, its results are inconsistent with the c-command condition on movement, which has been widely adopted in the principles-and-parameters framework and minimalism (see §8.1).

Second, we show how the ACC is one instance of a crosslinguistically reasonably well-attested syntactic type that we call camouflage. The theoretical notion of camouflage construction can be traced to the work of Alice Harris on Georgian in the relational grammar framework of the 1970s (see Harris 1981:Ch. 3, 'Object camouflage'). Section 12 provides a discussion of the specific Georgian grammatical facts. Johnson and Postal (1980) further developed the camouflage idea, giving a brief precise theoretical treatment in the framework of arc-pair grammar. Central to their account was the assumption that while the possessor of a camouflage construction is in one sense ('at one level') external to the larger DP, in another sense it manifests superficially as an ordinarily situated possessor DP component of the containing DP. As noted above, a parallel assumption framed in movement terms is basic to the present account of the ACC.

In addition to these larger theoretical consequences, the present analyses have numerous more restricted implications. Our article is the first to discuss the resumptive-*with* construction in AAE, a grammatical pattern that arguably involves possessor raising. And the notion of camouflage sheds light on the analysis of *self* in AAE and standard English reflexive pronouns such as *himself*.

A few background remarks about grammatical features of AAE are required to maximize understanding of the examples that follow. First, AAE is characterized by the

<sup>1</sup> We use the term *CAMOUFLAGE* in an entirely different sense from Spears, who defines camouflaged forms as 'phonologically similar to identical forms in the base language . . . , but which are used with different semantic values' (1982:850).

optionality of the (tensed) copula, of the third-person singular present-tense *-s* ending, and of the morphological genitive inflection. The nonoccurrence of these features in AAE sentences is extremely common, though far from categorical. Green, for example, notes that AAE usage of copula and auxiliary verbal forms ranges from full to contracted forms to complete absence (*he is gone, he's gone, he gone*). Green also describes third-person singular present-tense *-s* absence (*she like me*) as the 'default form' for AAE (2002:99–100), although third singular V-*s* marking is permissible as well. Similarly, genitive marking of AAE possessor DPs is optional for nonpronominal forms (*Ray('s) cousin*). This last feature is crucial to reading the examples in this article, many of which have nonpronominal possessors. Ample research has documented variability in the presence or absence of these morphological elements in AAE (Labov et al. 1968, Labov 1969, 1972, Wolfram 1969, Fasold 1972, Baugh 1980, Rickford 1998, Green 2002).

All our data come from two sources. Many of the examples have been elicited from, and judged for grammaticality by, the second author of this article (hereafter SM), who grew up as a native AAE speaker in southeast Georgia. The rest of the sentences were produced by native AAE speakers in spontaneous speech gathered by SM in normal conversations. We tag these sentences 'unelicited'. In all cases, the naturally occurring (unelicited) data converge with the data judged for grammaticality by SM. In contrast to Beavers and Koontz-Garboden (2006a,b), we avoided the internet in obtaining the AAE data cited in this article. While the latter source can be of great value, in the current context it is essentially impossible to identify a specific variant of English for given internet examples.

In what follows, we first give further documentation of the ACC and distinguish it from related constructions, and then argue against the claim of Beavers and Koontz-Garboden (2006a) that ACC DPs such as *his ass* are morphologically complex pronouns. We next turn to an investigation of the OUTER properties of the ACC (binding, control, etc.), which indicate that the ACC possessor behaves as if it were not the possessor of a larger DP, indeed as if it were not inside a larger DP at all. We then consider the INNER properties of the ACC, which show that the possessor behaves in ways similar to a normal possessor internal to a larger DP. Semantic restrictions on the ACC possessor are taken up in turn, leading to a preliminary analysis of the ACC, which accounts for the conflicting behavior of the possessor described earlier. At this point we investigate the RESUMPTIVE-*with* CONSTRUCTION, a subcase of the ACC found in AAE, which has no analog in standard English. We then offer preliminary remarks on the possibility of analyzing *self* as an ACC mask, and advance the idea that standard English reflexives may be camouflage structures, with *self* as the mask. We then argue against a number of alternatives to our approach that do not involve movement. Finally, we place the ACC in a broader crosslinguistic context of other constructions that can reasonably be hypothesized to be camouflage constructions and review the theoretical challenges the ACC poses for syntactic theory.

**2. PRELIMINARY DATA.** It is important not to confuse the ACC with two other constructions found in AAE. One, which we label the A/OFF CONSTRUCTION, is illustrated by examples like those in 5.

- (5) a. He probably talk his ass off when you there. (unelicited)  
 b. That guy been working his ass off.

The a/off construction utilizes the noun *ass* and other ACC masks. This construction exists in varieties of English other than AAE. Our impression is that it is as free in the dialects of the first and third authors as it is in AAE, but the a/off construction is distinct

from the ACC in clear ways. The ACC, for example, yields semantic equivalences, as in 3a,b; *I saw his ass yesterday* is truth-conditionally equivalent to *I saw him yesterday*. No such equivalent exists for the a/off construction, as shown in 6b,c. Rather the latter adds an adverbial meaning equivalent to something like ‘high on the amount/degree/intensity scale’.

- (6) a. Susie<sub>1</sub> laughed her<sub>1</sub> ass off. = Susie laughed a great deal/very hard.  
 b. \*Susie<sub>1</sub> laughed herself<sub>1</sub> off.  
 c. \*Susie<sub>1</sub> laughed her<sub>1</sub> off.

Moreover, the a/off construction is obligatorily linked to the presence of the particle *off* where the ACC involves no linkage to a particular particle. In this way, the a/off construction resembles other similar standard English constructions involving fixed particles and fixed base nouns (e.g. *I cried my heart out*, *he talked my ear off*). Although they do share certain common features with the AAC, we cannot deal with any of these constructions here.

An AAE construction distinct from the ACC, one not common to standard colloquial English, involves the combination of adjectives or nouns with the nouns *ass* and *behind* to form complex adjectives only usable preminally.<sup>2</sup>

- (7) a. She got a crazy/foolish/stupid/ugly ass/behind boyfriend.  
 b. \*He is crazy/foolish/stupid/ugly ass/behind.

This construction can also follow a genitive, but then *ass* is not the mask of an ACC.

- (8) Gwen’s dumb ass husband forgot the beer.

Such cases are independent of the ACC, and represent regular possessive DPs preceding an adjective that simply happens to be a complex one formed with *ass*. We do not discuss this adjectival construction any further either.

The AAE variant of the ACC permits several other masks besides *ass*, including *behind*, *butt*, and *tail*. These resemble *ass* in denoting the buttocks on their literal usage. They vary in their degree of social acceptability, with *ass* considered the most vulgar. Church-going people, for instance, would not use *ass* because it is considered a swear word. Rather, they would substitute *behind*, *butt*, or *tail*.

The mask whose usage most closely resembles *ass* is *behind*, which is broadly socially acceptable (it can be used in church or at social gatherings). It can substitute for *ass* in almost all cases, whereas *butt* and *tail* cannot. Although AAE has other terms that refer to the buttocks, including *booty* and *rear end*, these cannot substitute for *ass* in the ACC, and the noun *buttocks* itself also cannot be an ACC mask, as shown in 9 and 10.<sup>3</sup>

- (9) a. I’m gonna fire his sorry ass/behind/butt/tail.  
 b. I’m gonna fire his sorry \*backside/\*booty/?rear end/\*fanny/\*buttocks.  
 (10) a. Your silly ass/behind/butt/tail gonna get in trouble.  
 b. Your silly \*backside/\*booty/??rear end/\*fanny/\*buttocks gonna get in trouble.

The fact that not all AAE words for buttocks can be used in the ACC strongly favors the view that the ACC is based on a restricted set of grammatical nouns with specific

<sup>2</sup> Arthur Spears points out the following forms involving nouns: *punk/hol/slut/pimp/fool ass daddy/momma*.

<sup>3</sup> In the following examples, *booty* and *fanny* are probably not acting as masks in the sense of this article.

(i) Get your booty on the floor and dance.

(ii) I’m taking my fanny to bed.

(unelicited)

syntactic properties (see the discussion following 67). Despite the variety of masks that alternate with *ass*, for reasons of space, we largely restrict ourselves to *ass* alone.

The data in 11–16 represent unelicited (spontaneous) speech by third parties illustrating the occurrence of the ACC in various syntactic positions. They also indicate a range of adjectival modifiers that can appear in the ACC.

- (11) Subject position
  - a. His ass ain' going nowhere.
  - b. Your ass ain' finna be here forever.
  - c. My ass musta been crazy. I ain' had on no jacket or nothing.
  - d. He gon find out his ass gon have to move.
  - e. Ada Mae ass gone to jail and all that shit.
- (12) Object of a preposition
  - a. Ain' nobody gon have time for her ass either.
  - b. He be coughing so much, I pray to the Lord I ain' got no TBs from his ass.
  - c. What if them boys come back here after his ass?
  - d. Ain' nobody gon do no damn autopsy on his ass cause he old.
  - e. That other woman lived with his ass 12 years.
- (13) Object position
  - a. I'ma aggravate his ass.
  - b. I don't even know her pregnant ass and I'm mad at her.
  - c. She ain' marrying his stupid ass.
  - d. He wanted to get Putin ass.
  - e. They gon impeach his ass one.
  - f. She say she started to take that stick and beat the both of our ass with it.
  - g. I could sue they asses.
- (14) First object of a double-object construction
  - a. You got to do just what them people tell your ass to do.
  - b. But couldn't nobody tell her ass nothing.
  - c. Ain' nobody told his ass that.
- (15) Raising to object: *let*, *make*
  - a. . . . but I let his muthafuckin' ass know, I'm over here hungry.
  - b. They ain' gon sleep and they ain' gon let your ass sleep.
  - c. She know that the chaplain ain' gon let her little ass run the streets.
  - d. They'll put him in jail and make his ass stay there.
  - e. He made her ass borrow some money off the job for his ass.
- (16) Coordination<sup>4</sup>
  - a. Me and Travis ass sitting up here hungry.

<sup>4</sup> Even though an ACC can be coordinated with another DP, a mask cannot be coordinated with another N.

- (i) a. I saw his brother and his sister.
- b. I saw his brother and sister.
- (ii) a. I saw his ass and his girlfriend at the party.
- b. \*I saw his ass and girlfriend at the party.
- (iii) a. I'm gon sue their asses and their wives.
- b. \*I'm gon sue their asses and wives.

And two ACC masks cannot be conjoined.

- (iv) \*I'm gon sue her ass and butt.

The impossibility of conjoining a mask and a nonmask may follow in part from Ross's 1967 coordinate structure constraint. But we cannot pursue that idea here.

3. THE ACC IS NOT A MORPHOLOGICALLY COMPLEX PRONOMINAL. Beavers and Koontz-Garboden (2006a:504) claim that ACC DPs are (morphologically) COMPLEX PRONOUNS: ‘These cases and others we consider below lead us to conclude that *your ass* is a pronoun—but a pronoun of a peculiar type since it appears in both reflexive and non-reflexive contexts’.

The analysis of ACC DPs as complex pronouns ignores the fact that a wide range of adjectives can occur between the possessor DP and the noun. The examples in 1 and 2 already show this and, curiously, Beavers and Koontz-Garboden (2006a:505) themselves note the possibility. Any of the adjectives in 17d, for example, plus many others can appear grammatically in the slots in 17a,b,c.

- (17) a. His — ass make me sick.  
 b. Take your — ass outta here.  
 c. He need(s) to sit his — ass down.  
 d. big, loud, bony, crazy, crippled, cross-eyed, dumb, fat, greedy, knock-kneed, old, uppity, skinny, slow, sorry, stupid, ugly, tall, short, little, silly.

A clear semantic generalization is that all the adjectival uses are NONRESTRICTIVE. So 18a,b are essentially paraphrases.<sup>5</sup>

- (18) a. They need to fire Willie stupid ass.  
 b. They need to fire Willie, who is stupid.

Another nonrestrictive adjective often used in the ACC is *own*.

- (19) Willie need to take care of his (own) ass.

The nonrestrictive condition accounts for the impossibility of adjectives that do not lend themselves to such a use when used pronominally.<sup>6</sup>

- (20) a. They need to find Willie younger/older/oldest brother.  
 b. \*They need to find Willie younger/older/oldest ass.

Far from forming a small closed set of expressions, the ACC then manifests along this dimension the freedom expected of an open syntactic phrase type.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> As John Robert Ross pointed out to us, the parallelism between nonrestrictive relative clauses and pronominal adjectives breaks down with quantified subjects.

- (i) Ain’t none of y’all ugly asses gon win.  
 (ii) \*Ain’t none of y’all asses, who are ugly, gon win.

The exact role of full appositive relatives in AAE has yet to be investigated. Example (iii) would normally be expressed as (iv) or (v).

- (iii) John, who ugly, ain’t never gon get married.  
 (iv) John ugly ass ain’t never gon get married.  
 (v) Ol’ ugly ass John ain’t never gon get married.

<sup>6</sup> John Robert Ross pointed out to us that the nonrestrictive condition also accounts for the unacceptability of (i).

- (i) His (\*other) ass in trouble.  
 (ii) That guy (\*other) ass in trouble.

<sup>7</sup> Apparently the numeral *two* is acceptable in an ACC, but higher numerals are not. The topic deserves further investigation.

- (i) a. Their two asses in trouble.  
 b. The two of their asses in trouble.  
 (ii) a. \*Their eleven asses in trouble.  
 b. All eleven of their asses in trouble.

Second, the possessor DP of an ACC is not restricted to definite pronouns. The possessor can be any of a wide range of NONPRONOMINAL DPs; moreover, as 21g and 21m indicate, these combine with a following adjective.

- (21) a. He wanted to get Putin ass. (unelicited)  
 b. Stacy ass gon get fired.  
 c. You know, I had to fire a man ass today.  
 d. Who(se) ass you gon fire today?  
 e. Who(se) sorry ass made this mess?  
 f. All they ass in trouble.  
 g. I don't want nobody broke ass askin' me for money today.  
 h. Everybody ass gon get fired.  
 i. Somebody ass in trouble/gonna get beat down.  
 j. I'ma beat somebody ass if . . .  
 k. A lotta people ass gon get fired.  
 l. We need to get Joe brother('s) ass to come with us.  
 m. Now you putting my sister damn ass in jail. (unelicited)  
 o. That's that man who ass got beat up last night.  
 p. It/that was Ray ass who/that got hurt out there.

Beavers and Koontz-Garboden themselves also recognize the existence of nonpronominal possessors (2006a:506, n. 3):

We have ignored non-pronominal + *ass* expressions such as *John's ass*. They are certainly possible and their productivity suggests that there is still a compositional process involved in forming *ass* expressions (perhaps similar to the productivity of the *self* morpheme found in reflexives with nonpronominal possessives, as in *Michael's bad self*). However, these expressions do not have exactly the same distribution as *your ass* (cf. *I told him<sub>i</sub> that [his ass]<sub>i</sub>/\*[John's ass]<sub>i</sub> had to leave*), suggesting that they are at least a partially independent phenomenon.

The genuine contrast discussed in their footnote does nothing to support the idea that *John's ass* and *his ass* represent distinct constructions. The facts are exactly as expected under any analysis that treats the ACC as a DP with an internal possessor. The contrast then follows from the general principle, however formulated, that a pronoun cannot bind a nonpronominal DP (such as a proper name), which independently differentiates the forms in 22a,b.

- (22) a. I told him<sub>1</sub> that his<sub>1</sub> brother/\*John's<sub>1</sub> brother had to leave.  
 b. I told him<sub>1</sub> that he<sub>1</sub>/\*John<sub>1</sub> had to leave.

That is, a pronoun in a higher clause cannot be anteceded by a nonpronominal DP in a lower clause. In the principles-and-parameters framework, this condition is usually subsumed under Principle C, which requires that an R-expression be free. So an account of 23 can in no way support a view that *his ass* and *John's ass* are partially independent phenomena.

- (23) I told him<sub>1</sub> that his<sub>1</sub> ass/\*John<sub>1</sub>'s ass had to leave.

The fact that the possessor DP is not limited to pronominal forms (see 21) plus the rich possibilities for adjectival modification (see 17) together leave little doubt that the ACC has to be regarded as a complex DP whose first element can be a full possessive DP and whose subsequent elements arguably have the same superficial structure as the corresponding parts of regular possessive DPs. That is, both variants of 24a appear to manifest a structure AT LEAST as rich as 24b.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> We leave a number important issues aside, such as the exact syntactic positions of possessor DPs and the adjectives.



- (24) a. Stacy dumb brother/ass  
 b. [<sub>DP</sub> DP [<sub>XP</sub> Adjective NP]]

Section 6 supplies independent evidence that expressions like *Stacy dumb ass* are as much constituents as *Stacy dumb brother*.

A third argument indicates that the ACC cannot, contrary to Beavers and Koontz-Garboden (2006a), be conceived of as a universal pronoun. Various environments exhibit minimal English pronouns but bar instances of the ACC where the ACC possessor is a pronoun. One of these is that the ACC cannot itself be a possessor.

- (25) a. I'm gonna fire his ass.  
 b. \*I'm gonna fire his ass('s) friend.  
 c. His ass is ugly.  
 d. \*His ass('s) car is ugly.

The restriction above holds in the case of an ACC with a nonpronominal possessor as well.<sup>9</sup>

- (26) a. Willie brother ass in trouble.  
 b. \*Willie ass brother in trouble.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, the restriction against an ACC as possessor accounts for the ungrammaticality of double-ACC constructions such as in 27.

- (27) a. Willie ass/butt in trouble.  
 b. \*Willie ass butt in trouble.

Another place where ordinary pronouns appear but the ACC cannot is in interrogative tags.

- (28) John('s) ass a fool,  
 a. ain't he?  
 b. \*ain't his ass?  
 (29) a. That guy a fool, ain't he?  
 b. ??That guy a fool, ain't his ass?  
 c. He a fool, ain't he?  
 d. ?He a fool, ain't his ass?

A basic requirement of a confirmation tag is that the subject of the tag be a pronoun that agrees in person, number, and gender with the subject of the antecedent clause. The reason that 28b and 29b,d are marginal, we suggest, is that the subject of the tag is not a pronoun, but rather an ACC with a pronominal possessor.

A third environment open to pronouns but not to the ACC is represented by vocative positions (see §7 for discussion).

- (30) a. Hey you/Jim, come over here.  
 b. \*Hey your/Jim's ass, come over here.<sup>11</sup>

A fourth environment differentiating pronouns from the ACC is the subject of an imperative.

<sup>9</sup> The constraint against an ACC as possessor suggests analyzing the ACC in the following example as a (nonpossessor) subject of an ACC-*ing* construction.

(i) I'm not gon put up with your ass complaining all the time.

<sup>10</sup> Of course *Willie stupid/ugly ass brother* is acceptable, but then the possessor is *Willie*, not *Willie ass* (see 7).

<sup>11</sup> Example 30b with *your ass* and stress on *your* is more acceptable in the context of an authority (e.g. in the military) picking out an individual from a group of people.

- (31) a. You sit down now!  
 b. \*Your ass sit down now!

The placement of particles also distinguishes pronouns from the ACC (as John Robert Ross pointed out to us). A pronominal direct object cannot follow a particle, but an ACC can.

- (32) a. Vern might have pissed him off/\*off him.  
 b. Vern might have pissed his ass off/?off his ass.

While we have concluded that the ACC cannot viably be treated as pronominal, we have yet to specifically address Beavers and Koontz-Garboden's (2006a) five arguments against what they called the PossNP analysis. Argument one claims that 'the main distinction between *your ass* and PossNPs is compositionality: *your ass* shares reference with its putative possessive determiner, unlike PossNPs' (2006a:504).

While we regard the factual observation as essentially correct, one can state it more neutrally as simply denying that the mask use of *ass*, *butt*, and so on makes any semantic contribution to the overall meaning of the ACC. There are various potential ways of cashing out this observation: in this article, we claim that masks do not enter into semantic composition at all, so that the meaning of an ACC is just that of its possessor and any modifiers present. An alternative we do not pursue here is to claim that the meaning of a mask is a function that identifies its semantic value with that of its associated possessor (i.e. the identity function). Neither one of the possibilities supports the claim that an ACC is a pronoun.<sup>12</sup>

Beavers and Koontz-Garboden's second argument (2006a:505) is based on important observations about pronominal and reflexive antecedence. We account for these observations in §§4 and 8 without appeal to the notion that the ACC is a complex pronoun.

The third argument (p. 505) states that 'agreement is optional for plural *your ass*'.

- (33) a. You can sue their ass(es) if you want.  
 b. Sit y'all ass(es) down.

Such agreement is also sometimes optional for reflexives in AAE.<sup>13</sup>

- (34) a. They sittin' there all by theyself/?selves.  
 b. They sittin' there all by they own self/selves.

To the extent that *theyself*, *theyselves*, *they own self*, *they own selves* are pronouns, the fact that the plural *-s* is optional here seems to support Beavers and Koontz-Garboden's assumption that the optionality of plural *-s* is linked to their pronominal status.

Furthermore, it is clear that for ordinary nouns, the plural suffix does not represent agreement (concord) with the possessor, as the examples in 35 show.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> One commentator to an oral presentation of our ideas suggested that the ACC usage of masks involves very abstract meanings, along the lines of 'being' or 'identity' or 'person', so that *his ass* would mean *his being/identity/person*. This approach, which we find obscure, is incapable of handling any of the syntactic facts of this article, so we do not pursue it.

<sup>13</sup> Brian Joseph informs us that a similar alternation exists in Modern Greek reflexive forms, where both *ton eafto mas* 'ourself' and *tus eaftus mas* 'ourselves' are possible with a plural antecedent.

<sup>14</sup> The following examples involving floated quantifiers show clearly the difference between masks and nonmasks with respect to plural marking.

- (i) a. They ass all gon get killed.  
 b. They asses all gon get killed.  
 c. \*They sister all gon get killed.  
 d. They sisters all gon get killed.

- (35) a. my dog/dogs  
b. our dog/dogs

We follow Beavers and Koontz-Garboden in assuming that the plural marker found in *ass* in 33 is the result of agreement. But despite the fact that pluralization of ACC masks is different from that of ordinary nouns in the way that Beavers and Koontz-Garboden (2006a) observe, this cannot count as an argument for the pronominal status of the ACC, since an optional plural marker IS ALSO POSSIBLE WITH NONPRONOMINAL POSSESSORS (contra Beavers & Koontz-Garboden 2006b:4).<sup>15</sup>

- (36) a. We can sue those people *ass(es)* if we want.  
b. Them people/they *ass(es)* went on strike.

We return to the issue of plural marking in camouflage constructions in §10.

Beavers and Koontz-Garboden's fourth argument (2006a:505) states that the ACC behaves the way reflexive forms do in terms of modifiability. Their claim is that ordinary possessive DPs permit modifiers that are adjectives, PPs, or relative clauses, while the ACC allows only adjectives.

- (37) a. I borrowed your red jacket from Macy's that Sandy bought for you.  
b. \*The doctor<sub>i</sub> saw his<sub>i</sub> *ass* from Houston/who stopped by last week.  
c. \*The doctor<sub>i</sub> saw himself<sub>i</sub> from Houston/who stopped by last week.

The idea is that as a pronominal form, 37b behaves like 37c. But the following example undermines the conclusion from such data since *Carl ass* is evidently not a pronoun (see Beavers & Koontz-Garboden 2006b:4 for a similar observation).<sup>16</sup>

- (38) The doctor already saw Carl *ass* (\*from Houston/\*that stopped by last week).

Finally, Beavers and Koontz-Garboden (2006a:505–6) offer a fifth argument based on what they call N'-ellipsis. They claim that regular possessive DPs license this, while the ACC does not, supported by the following data.

- (39) a. Mary had her office<sub>i</sub> painted, and Jane had hers *e<sub>i</sub>* remodeled.  
b. \*John got himself<sub>i</sub>/his<sub>i</sub> *ass* a pedicure, and Pat got his *e<sub>i</sub>* a manicure.

While SM finds 39b unacceptable, the unelicited (spontaneous) example in 40a is fine. Crucially, there is no difference between a pronominal possessor (40a) and a nonpronominal possessor (40b); both are fine with N'-ellipsis. Therefore, N'-ellipsis provides no evidence that an ACC with a pronominal possessor is a complex pronoun.

- (40) a. I guess she get tired of his *ass* like I get tired of yours. (unelicited)  
b. I guess she get tired of his *ass* like I get tired of Ray's.

**4. BINDING.** This section examines the binding and control properties of the ACC. Consider first the fact that an ACC possessor can bind a reflexive, a key fact discovered by Beavers and Koontz-Garboden (2006a:505). Although they discuss only pronominal possessors in the ACC, nonpronominal possessors can also bind a reflexive, as shown in 41e and 41i.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Although, as indicated earlier, we have in general avoided using internet data in this article, it is possible to find examples on the internet of the form [plural lexical DP + singular *ass*].

(i) I WANT THOSE COPS ASS ON A PLATTER.

<sup>16</sup> Note that no such constraint holds on appositive relatives (see n. 5).

(i) I just fired John (*ass*), who I never really liked.

<sup>17</sup> Emphatic reflexives exhibit a similar pattern.

(i) Willie *ass* himself done left.

- (41) a. His<sub>1</sub> ass done messed himself<sub>1</sub>/hissself<sub>1</sub> up.  
 b. His<sub>1</sub> ass done made himself<sub>1</sub>/hissself<sub>1</sub> mad.  
 c. They<sub>1</sub> ass(es) done made theyself<sub>1</sub>/theyselfes<sub>1</sub> mad.  
 d. Your<sub>1</sub> ass making a fool of yourself<sub>1</sub>.  
 e. John<sub>1</sub> ass making a fool of hissself<sub>1</sub>/hissself<sub>1</sub>.  
 f. They<sub>1</sub> ass embarassin' theysself<sub>1</sub>.  
 g. Your<sub>1</sub> ass must be kiddin' yourself<sub>1</sub>.  
 h. Your<sub>1</sub> ass lyin' to yourself<sub>1</sub>.  
 i. Willie<sub>1</sub> ass need to help himself<sub>1</sub>/hissself<sub>1</sub>.  
 j. My silly ass tried to break up dat fight, and got myself hurt.  
 k. My ass making a fool of myself.

In all these cases, the reflexive must match the possessor of the ACC in person, number, and gender.

- (42) a. \*His<sub>1</sub> ass done messed itself<sub>1</sub> up.  
 b. \*His<sub>1</sub> ass done made itself<sub>1</sub> mad.  
 c. \*They<sub>1</sub> ass(es) done got hissself<sub>1</sub>/hissself<sub>1</sub> mad.  
 d. \*Your<sub>1</sub> ass making a fool of itself<sub>1</sub>/hissself<sub>1</sub>.  
 e. \*My<sub>1</sub> ass making a fool of itself<sub>1</sub>/hissself<sub>1</sub>.  
 f. \*John<sub>1</sub> ass making a fool of itself<sub>1</sub>/theyself<sub>1</sub>.

The examples in 42 also show that entire ACC DPs like *his ass* and *your ass* cannot antecede a reflexive *itself* (which would then agree in person, number, and gender with the overall ACC DP head noun, the mask *ass*).

Further examples of the possessor binding a reflexive are given in 43.

- (43) a. Now my<sub>1</sub> ass setting up in here by myself<sub>1</sub>. (unelicited)  
 b. But I told his<sub>1</sub> ass bout hissself<sub>1</sub>. (unelicited)

Just as ACC possessors can antecede reflexives, they can also antecede reciprocals.

- (44) a. They (ass) wanna kill each other.  
 b. They (ass) always tellin' on each other.  
 c. They (ass) tried to outslick each other.

In contrast, a regular possessor (of a non-ACC DP) is unable to antecede a reflexive.

- (45) a. \*His<sub>1</sub>/Ray<sub>1</sub> sister done made himself<sub>1</sub>/hissself<sub>1</sub> mad.  
 b. \*Your sister done made yourself mad.

Similarly, as Beavers and Koontz-Garboden (2006a:505) also discovered, the possessor in an ACC cannot antecede a NONREFLEXIVE PRONOUN in object position of the same clause. We extend this observation to nonpronominal possessors of ACC DPs in 46d.

- (46) a. Your<sub>1</sub> ass made yourself<sub>1</sub>/\*you<sub>1</sub> mad.  
 b. Your<sub>1</sub> ass worry yourself<sub>1</sub>/\*you<sub>1</sub> all the time.  
 c. They<sub>1</sub> ass made theyself<sub>1</sub>/themselves<sub>1</sub>/\*them<sub>1</sub> mad.  
 d. Willie<sub>1</sub> ass made hissself<sub>1</sub>/\*him<sub>1</sub> mad.

These cases contrast with the possessor of a regular (non-ACC) DP, which can antecede a nonreflexive pronoun in object position.

- (47) a. His<sub>1</sub> mother made him<sub>1</sub>/\*hissself<sub>1</sub> mad.  
 b. Your<sub>1</sub> sister done made you<sub>1</sub>/\*yourself<sub>1</sub> mad.

The word *ass* used as a camouflage mask behaves systematically differently from the word *ass* used to refer to the buttocks.

- (48) a. His<sub>1</sub> ass hurtin' himself<sub>1</sub>/\*him<sub>1</sub>.  
 b. His<sub>1</sub> ASS hurtin' him<sub>1</sub>/\*himself<sub>1</sub>.  
 c. His<sub>1</sub> buttocks hurtin' him<sub>1</sub>/\*himself<sub>1</sub>.

When *ass* is stressed, it cannot be an ACC mask; rather it must refer to the buttocks (see 65 below for related observations). Predictably, when *ass* is an ACC mask, its possessor can antecede an object reflexive, but not a nonreflexive pronoun, as shown in 48a. By contrast, when *ass* is used to refer to buttocks, its possessor can antecede an object nonreflexive pronoun, but not a reflexive, as shown in 48b. Stressed *ass* behaves exactly as the word *buttocks* itself, as shown in 48c. Altogether then, the above data support the generalization in 49.

- (49) An ACC with possessor X occurring in position P behaves like an isolated X in position P as far as anteceding pronouns and reflexives.

Formulation 49 does not exclude cases where an ACC with possessor X differs from X in terms of being anteceded. Consider the unelicited examples in 50.

- (50) a. I just told him<sub>1</sub> about his<sub>1</sub> ass.  
 b. You<sub>1</sub> get your<sub>1</sub> ass killed.  
 c. I<sub>1</sub>'m setting my<sub>1</sub> own ass on fire. Cigarette ashes dropping on me.

In none of these cases can the ACC with possessor X be replaced by X.

- (51) a. I just told him<sub>1</sub> about himself<sub>1</sub>/\*him<sub>1</sub>.  
 b. You<sub>1</sub> get yourself<sub>1</sub>/\*you<sub>1</sub> killed.  
 c. I<sub>1</sub>'m setting myself<sub>1</sub>/\*me<sub>1</sub> on fire.

If one were to assume that the ACC possessors in 50 are the genitive forms of the reflexive, as proposed in, for example, McCawley 1998, then 49 might be generalized further as follows.<sup>18</sup>

- (52) An ACC with possessor X occurring in position P behaves like an isolated X in position P as far as both anteceding and being anteceded.

Another example that supports 49 comes from the syntax of coordination. If the ACC with possessor X is coordinated with another DP, it acts like X in terms of its overall person features, as shown by its determination of the person features of reflexives.

- (53) a. Me/My ass and Ray got ourselves/ourself/\*theyself a job.  
 b. You/Your ass and Ray should get y'all self/selves/\*ourselves a job.  
 c. Ray and her/her ass got theyself/\*yourselves a job.

For example, in 53a, coordination of an ACC whose possessor is first person with a third-person singular DP, *my ass and Ray*, requires a first-person reflexive, just as a coordination of *me and Ray* does, and so forth.

Arguably, a further consequence of 49 is that the general ban on antecedence between sister conjuncts, illustrated in 54a, holds as well for camouflage cases.

- (54) a. Greg<sub>1</sub>, Mary and \*him<sub>1</sub>/him<sub>2</sub> ain't never comin' to my party again.  
 b. Greg<sub>1</sub> ass, Mary and \*him<sub>1</sub>/him<sub>2</sub> ain't never comin' to my party again.

<sup>18</sup> McCawley (1998:379, n. 22) claimed: 'The reciprocal has a genitive form but the reflexive does not:

(i) Max and Rita plagiarized each other's work.  
 (i') Max<sub>i</sub> sold his<sub>i</sub>/\*himself's car.

However, this difference is a matter of morphology, rather than syntax. *His* in (i') can be treated as reflexive the same way that *you* in *He loves you* is treated as accusative, even though there is no overt difference between an accusative *you* and a nominative *you*.'

Control constructions are consistent with generalization 49, as shown with the matrix control verbs *need* and *try*.

- (55) a. Why your<sub>1</sub> ass need to talk about yourself<sub>1</sub> all the time?
- b. Why his<sub>1</sub> ass need to brag about hisself<sub>1</sub> all the time?
- c. Y'all<sub>1</sub> ass should try to look like y'all<sub>1</sub> doing something.
- d. \*Why your<sub>1</sub> sister need to talk about yourself<sub>1</sub>?

Consider again the antecedents of nonreflexive pronouns. In some cases, the antecedent can be either the possessor of a regular DP or the possessor of an ACC DP (56 and 57). The unelicited examples in 58 show the same thing.

- (56) a. Ray<sub>1</sub> mother thinks he<sub>1</sub> a genius.
- b. Ray<sub>1</sub> ass thinks he<sub>1</sub> a genius.
- (57) a. Ray<sub>1</sub> mother mad at his<sub>1</sub> wife.
- b. Ray<sub>1</sub> ass mad at his<sub>1</sub> wife.
- (58) a. And when her<sub>1</sub> ass was on TV talking bout, 'I just want him back', I knew she<sub>1</sub> had done did something.
- b. He'll go to court and name her<sub>1</sub> ass up there and make her<sub>1</sub> reputation bad.
- c. I tried to warn her<sub>1</sub> ass again tonight, but she<sub>1</sub> wouldn't listen.
- d. Them people gon rag his<sub>1</sub> ass until he<sub>1</sub> get out of it.

These examples show that an AAE possessor, whether of a regular DP or an ACC, can antecede a subsequent pronoun. In contrast, there are other examples where independently of the ACC, a pronoun must be bound by the subject (and not a possessor contained within the subject). In all of these cases, an ACC possessor can, by contrast, antecede the pronoun.

- (59) a. Ray<sub>1</sub> mother<sub>2</sub> is out of her<sub>2</sub>/\*his<sub>1</sub> mind.
- b. Ray<sub>1</sub> ass is out of his<sub>1</sub>/\*its mind.
- (60) a. Your sister was late, wasn't \*you/she?
- b. Your ass was late, wasn't \*it/\*he/\*she/you?
- (61) a. Ray<sub>1</sub> mother<sub>2</sub> sounds like she<sub>2</sub>/\*he<sub>1</sub> is pissed off.
- b. Ray<sub>1</sub> ass sounds like he<sub>1</sub>/\*it is pissed off.

In 59, the idiom *out of x's mind* normally requires that the pronoun be bound by the matrix subject, not a possessor of the matrix subject. In 60, the tag pronoun normally needs to have the subject of the matrix clause as an antecedent, not a possessor of the subject. And in 61, the pronominal subject of the embedded clause normally needs to be bound by the subject of the matrix clause, not a possessor of the subject. But in each of these cases, if the subject is an ACC, the possessor can (in fact, must) bind the pronoun.

A remarkable property of the ACC is that the ACC DP itself can never antecede a pronoun (assuming that *ass* would determine third-person singular pronominal agreement). Consider the exchange in 62.

- (62) a. Your ass in trouble!
- b. No, I ain't.
- c. No, it ain't.

The most natural way to deny 62a is 62b. While 62c can be said in this context, it is then only a kind of joke. This example shows that *your ass* cannot be the antecedent of the pronoun *it*.

Similarly, 63 can only be continued with 63a, not 63b. And in 64, *Alice sorry ass* cannot antecede *it*; only *her* is possible.

- (63) I said I was gonna fire Alice sorry ass,
  - a. but she didn't come to work today.
  - b. \*but it didn't come to work today.
- (64) I'm gonna fire Alice sorry ass.
  - a. I'm gonna fire her.
  - b. \*I'm gonna fire it.

A more vivid example illustrates the same point.

- (65) The doctor said he gon operate on her butt,
  - a. . . . even though it looked alright to us.
  - b. . . . even though she looked alright to us.

While both of these sentences are fine, they have sharply different semantics and intonation. Example 65a states only that the person's buttocks looked alright; 65b indicates something about the overall state of the person. And the intonation of *her butt* associated with the two continuations are distinct. With continuation 65a, stress is on *butt*; with continuation 65b, stress is on *operate*.

The fact that an ACC is associated with a specific intonation on the mask is supported by the following fact. It is possible to stress the ACC possessor, but not the mask, thus contrasting with regular nouns, which permit strong stress on either.<sup>19</sup>

- (66) a. WILLIE ass coming for dinner.
  - b. \*Willie ASS coming for dinner.
  - c. WILLIE girlfriend coming for dinner.
  - d. Willie GIRLFRIEND coming for dinner.
- (67) a. Only WILLIE ass complaining.
  - b. \*Only Willie ASS complaining.
  - c. Only WILLIE girlfriend complaining.
  - d. Only Willie GIRLFRIEND complaining.

So these examples show that *ass* as a mask is associated with specific intonational properties. And we observed earlier that *ass* as a mask is also associated with specific semantic properties (e.g. lack of truth-functional meaning) and syntactic properties (e.g. allows its possessor to bind a reflexive external to the ACC DP). The fact that *ass* as an ACC mask differs from the lexical *ass* meaning *buttocks* along phonetic, semantic, and syntactic dimensions indicates that the ACC usage represents a distinct set of lexical items, and furthermore, that the properties of the ACC are not a function of some general metonymy phenomenon, contrary to Spears's claims cited at the beginning of the article. Furthermore, the fact that the masks form a small set of grammatical morphemes with distinct phonological, syntactic, and semantic properties makes it implausible that the properties of *ass* and other masks could be handled by claiming (as one referee does) that the interpretation of an ACC is 'a matter of use and conventionalized implicature, not a matter of grammar'. There is no reason, on such a view, that phonological, syntactic, and semantic properties should all CONVERGE on the same small set of lexical items.

**5. FINITE VERB AGREEMENT.** Section 4 established the generalization that for pronominal antecedence of all sorts, an ACC with possessor X in some position P behaves

<sup>19</sup> In (i), the mask seems able to bear stress, perhaps because it is phrase-final. The intonation of ACCs deserves much further study.

(i) I'm gonna sue their motherfuckin' ass.

like an isolated X in P. Somewhat surprisingly then, for AAE verbal agreement, the person/number features of the ACC with possessor X are those of the mask (under the null hypothesis that such are third person) and not those of X, as illustrated in 68.

- (68) a. Your ass/You is dreaming.  
 b. You are dreaming.  
 c. \*Your ass are dreaming.  
 d. Your ass/You dreaming.

When the subject is *you*, either *is* or *are* is a possible copula verb. But when the subject is *your ass*, the copula verb *are* is impossible. These data illustrate the generalization in 69; exx. 70–72 further illustrate the substance of 69.

- (69) Finite verb agreement with an ACC subject whose possessor is X is determined by the person/number features of the mask, not by those of X.
- (70) a. Is you/your ass crazy?  
 b. Are you crazy?  
 c. \*Are your ass crazy?  
 d. You/Your ass crazy?
- (71) a. I'm dreaming.  
 b. I am dreaming.  
 c. \*I dreaming.
- (72) a. \*My ass am dreaming.  
 b. My ass dreaming.  
 c. My ass is dreaming.

Note that in the first-person singular, the copula verb *am* is obligatory (see 71c). Therefore, in 72b, *my ass* must be third-person singular, and not first-person singular. If *my ass* were first-person singular, then the absence of the first-person singular copula in 72b would be impossible.

Lastly, consider 73 and 74, which show that *my ass* simultaneously determines third-person singular finite verb agreement while the possessor binds a reflexive pronoun.

- (73) Now my<sub>1</sub> ass setting up in here by myself<sub>1</sub>. (unelicited)
- (74) a. My ass making a fool of myself, ain't I?  
 b. I'm making a fool of myself, ain't I?  
 c. \*I making a fool of myself, ain't I?

These examples show that the conflicting properties of an ACC exist simultaneously in the same example.

**6. CONSTITUENCY.** The possessor DP of the ACC plus any prenominal modifiers and the mask (*ass*, *butt*, etc.) altogether form a constituent. This means that despite the facts in §4, much of the behavior of the ACC is nonetheless that of a regular possessive DP. This claim is supported by the following parallelisms between the ACC and ordinary possessive DPs.

- (75) Positioning with respect to particles  
 a. Vern might have pissed (off) Judy's ass (off).  
 b. Vern might have pissed (off) Judy's mother (off).
- (76) Raising to subject  
 a. Judy<sub>1</sub> ass look like she<sub>1</sub> in trouble.  
 b. Judy mother<sub>1</sub> look like she<sub>1</sub> in trouble.
- (77) Passivization  
 a. Judy('s) ass done got fired.  
 b. Judy('s) mother done got fired.



## (78) WH-question

- a. Whose/Who ass you gon fire next?
- b. Whose/Who mother you gon fire next?

With respect to the constructions exemplified here, the ACC behaves like any other DP with a possessor. Specifically, the possessor DP and the mask noun are never separable except by prenominal modifiers.

- (79) a. \*Vern might have pissed Judy('s) off ass.
- b. \*Judy('s) was arrested ass yesterday.
- c. \*Who you gon fire ass next?

Recall that §5 indicated that AAE finite verb agreement is determined not by the possessor subconstituent of the ACC but by the ACC DP itself. The facts in this section, along with those in §5, justify the claim that the ACC is a constituent. In particular, the data in 75–79 show that the possessor is part of the ACC, arguably with a constituent structure something like: [<sub>DP</sub> Judy [<sub>NP</sub> ass]].

There is though one other respect in which the ACC behaves differently from a normal possessive DP. An ACC possessor can never appear postnominally.

- (80) a. Carl ass in trouble.
- b. \*The ass of Carl (friend) in trouble.<sup>20</sup>
- (81) a. Carl brother in trouble.
- b. The brother of Carl friend in trouble. (acceptable, but sounds like standard English)

This fact is related to what appears to be a general characteristic of camouflage constructions (see §12), namely, that the possessor must appear in genitive position. We know of no clear instance of a camouflage construction that allows an analog of 80b (but see n. 50).

**7. SEMANTIC RESTRICTIONS ON THE POSSESSOR.** Various semantic restrictions hold for ACC possessor DPs but not for regular possessors. Consider first generalization 82.

- (82) In an ACC with possessor X, X is restricted to animates.
- (83) a. Your dog pissing me off. His ass need to stop barking.
- b. They gonna sue Ford ass.

In 83a, a pronoun referring to the animate *dog* DP can be the possessor. In 83b, *Ford*, interpreted as the name of a company, satisfies the ACC requirement that its possessor be animate. But this is consistent with the fact that company- (more generally, organization-) denoting DPs independently behave as animates in other ways in AAE like in Standard English, as shown in 84.

- (84) Sony plan to bring out a new kind of TV.

The facts in 83 and 84 contrast with those in 85.

- (85) a. That doll (\*ass) ugly.
- b. I sold that car (\*ass).
- c. \*I sold its ass. (cf. I sold it.)
- d. His name is Jamal (\*ass).

<sup>20</sup> A referee suggests 80b is grammatical, but that 'the postnominal usage is not found in AAE vernacular contexts where the ACC is most at home'. Such an account is inconsistent with the fact that (i), involving both a postnominal possessor and an ACC, is much better than 80b.

(i) The brother of Carl friend hate my ass.

In 85a, *that doll*, though humanlike in certain physical respects, is not animate, and it cannot be an ACC possessor (see Beavers & Koontz-Garboden 2006a:503 for a contrasting example in the dialect that they describe). In 85b, the inanimate *that car* also cannot qualify as an ACC possessor. Similarly, as shown in 85c, an inanimate pronoun anteceded by *that car* cannot be an ACC possessor. Finally, in 85d, the word *Jamal* denotes the name, not a person, and so is inanimate.

When a doll is personified, a pronoun referring to it can be an ACC possessor. But when the doll is referred to as an inanimate with *it*, a pronoun referring to it cannot be an ACC possessor.

- (86) a. Ken said Barbie<sub>1</sub> ugly, that's why he don't like her<sub>1</sub>/her<sub>1</sub> ass.
- b. That tore up Barbie<sub>1</sub> ugly, that's why I don't like it<sub>1</sub>/\*its<sub>1</sub> ass.

A more significant though subtle semantic constraint is given in 87.<sup>21</sup>

- (87) The possessor in an ACC must be of semantic type  $\langle e \rangle$ .<sup>22</sup> (the denotation domain of the DP is composed of individuals)

For instance, in 88 *a doctor* is a predicate and hence is rightly precluded by 87 from appearing as an ACC possessor. Definite predicative expressions reveal the same property (89, 90).

- (88) a. Carol is a doctor.
- b. \*Carol is a doctor ass.
- (89) a. Bob ass was the killer.
- b. \*Bob was the killer ass.
- (90) a. Which one was Bob?
- b. The killer (\*ass).

The expression *turn into* takes a predicative expression as the complement of the preposition; as predicted, the complement of *into* cannot be an ACC DP.

- (91) a. They trying to turn LeBron into a Michael Jordan. (e.g. in training camp)
- b. They trying to turn LeBron('s) ass into a Michael Jordan.
- c. \*They trying to turn LeBron into a Michael Jordan('s) ass.<sup>23</sup>

Similarly, the verbs *switch* and *change* take direct objects that are not of type  $\langle e \rangle$ . For example, 92a means she is going to choose somebody else to become her boyfriend. Examples 92c and 92d show that the ACC is possible with a plural possessor.

- (92) a. She gonna switch boyfriends (\*asses) again.
- b. She gonna change roommates (\*asses).
- c. She hate them boys (?asses).
- d. He fired a lotta people (?asses).

Recall that the ACC permits various quantified DP possessors, as in 93 (21 repeated).

- (93) a. Everybody ass gon get fired.
- b. Somebody ass in trouble/gonna get beat down.

<sup>21</sup> The unacceptability of (i) may be related to 87, although the analysis of (i) remains unclear.

(i) ?that jerk of a doctor (\*ass)

<sup>22</sup> See discussion around 93 and 94 below for a qualification.

<sup>23</sup> For some reason, the judgments are not as clear if the predicative DP does not have an indefinite article.

- (i) a. They trying to turn LeBron into Michael Jordan.
- b. They trying to turn LeBron('s) ass into Michael Jordan.
- c. ?They trying to turn LeBron into Michael Jordan('s) ass.

Strictly speaking, these examples violate the formulation in 87 since in these cases the syntactic possessors *everybody* and *somebody* are not of type  $\langle e \rangle$ . But the semantic interpretation corresponding to such quantified DP possessors involves an individual variable (one of type  $\langle e \rangle$ ). For 93a, the interpretation is roughly that given in 94.

(94) For every person X, X's ass gon get fired.

We assume that 87 really holds of such semantic forms as 94. See Heim & Kratzer 1998:Chs. 6 and 7 on a parallel type mismatch that quantifiers in object position give rise to. Consistent with the goals of this article, we leave the treatment at this informal level.<sup>24</sup>

The constraint in 87 is also justified by the fact that when DPs like *the president* denote individual people, they can form ACC possessors, but not when they have more complex functional denotations.

- (95) a. The president (ass) was elected six years ago.  
b. In America, the president (\*ass) (is) elected every four years.

Similarly, in 96 *Miss World* can refer to a particular person or it can have a functional interpretation. On the latter, the corresponding ACC is impossible, as shown in 96a. Example 96b shows that when *Miss World* denotes an individual, it can be the possessor of an ACC DP.

- (96) a. Last year, Miss World<sub>1</sub> was Italian. This year, she<sub>1</sub>/\*her<sub>1</sub> ass is Swedish.  
b. Last month, Miss World<sub>1</sub> visited Italy. This month, she<sub>1</sub>/her<sub>1</sub> ass visited Sweden.

Finally, we observe that the ACC cannot appear as a vocative. Example 97 is repeated from 30 above.

- (97) a. Hey you/Jim, come over here.  
b. \*Hey your/Jim's ass, come over here.  
(98) a. \*Rosalie ass, where you at?  
b. Rosalie, where your ass at?

Vocatives may well not denote the arguments of any predicates. If so, in addition to its animacy and type requirements, an ACC possessor might have to correspond to the argument of a predicate.

**8. SKETCH OF AN ANALYSIS.** Adopting now a more theoretical perspective, we suggest that a camouflage structure can be roughly characterized as one in which a clause that might be expected on purely semantic grounds to contain a DP X in some position P (or grammatical function F) actually contains in P a larger DP Y of a form generally characterizable as in 99.

- (99)  $Y = [_{DP} [_{DP} X] [_{NP} Z]]$   
(where X is the genitive form, that is, a DP morphologically appropriate for serving as a possessor in ordinary possessive DPs in the language in question)

Moreover, the noun head Z, which we have called the mask, does not enter into the semantic composition at all, although it may (as in the ACC case) be associated with specific implicatures (see Spears 1998).

It is useful to expand the descriptive terminology a bit. We say in such a case that the possessor DP X is the CAMOUFLAGED FORM or has been CAMOUFLAGED and we refer

<sup>24</sup> The possessor of an ACC can be a bound variable.

(i) Every man<sub>1</sub> think they<sub>1</sub> ass/they<sub>1</sub> the best at what they<sub>1</sub> do.

to the whole DP, Y, of the form 99 as the SHELL. So in the subcase of 99 representing the ACC, the camouflaged DP is the possessor and the mask is one of the set {*ass*, *butt*, *self*, . . . }.

Characteristic of camouflage structures is that the camouflaged DP manifests a dual behavior. In certain respects, it simply behaves as an element of a larger DP, parallel to the possessor in a regular possessive DP. Call these INNER properties. But in other ways, the camouflaged DP behaves as if there were no containing DP. Call these OUTER properties.

For the camouflaged DP in the ACC, the most salient outer properties are given in 100; the most evident inner properties are given in 101.

(100) The possessor DP:

- a. functions as an antecedent of a local reflexive (see 41);
- b. manifests the constraint barring local antecedence of a nonreflexive pronoun (see 46);
- c. plays a role in determining the person/number of a dominating coordinate DP (see 53);
- d. manifests the constraint barring antecedence between conjuncts (see 54);
- e. functions as a controller (see 55);
- f. antecedes the pronouns normally required in various specific constructions (e.g. *out of X's mind*, tag questions) to be anteceded by the DP in subject position (see 59–61);
- g. functions for the selectional requirements between DPs and predication elements (e.g. verbs, adjectives, nouns taking arguments) as a DP in the shell position normally would (see 108 and 109 below).

(101) The shell DP:

- a. acts like a standard possessive DP with its possessor DP in the normal DP-internal possessor position (see 17 and 21);
- b. determines finite verb agreement (see 68, 70–72);
- c. behaves syntactically as a constituent. The entire ACC shell DP can be passivized, raised, or extracted; the possessor DP cannot be (see 75–79).

So a central theoretical issue is to determine mechanisms whereby camouflaged DPs can be associated with both their inner and outer properties. How can grammatical theory permit the camouflaged DP to contrast with ordinary possessors in being a suitable controller, local reflexive antecedent, element involved in selection, and so forth? We take the right answer to be that the camouflaged DP originates external to the shell, but ends up inside the latter, which is based on one of a small set of semantically empty nouns. Under this view, the camouflaged DP behaves with respect to certain grammatical phenomena like a DP not embedded in a larger DP because, in one aspect of syntactic structure, it is external to the shell DP. Regular possessors, in contrast, would never have an origin external to the larger DP containing them.

There are various distinct ways in which the entirely informal view just sketched might be instantiated. One such treatment (of the Georgian camouflage case discussed in §12) was briefly presented in the particular framework of Johnson and Postal (1980: 620–21). We present an informal movement analysis. The purpose of this formulation is to express the central assumption in the most easily understandable terms to the broadest body of linguists, both syntacticians and others.

We propose then that the ACC-camouflaged DP moves into the possessor position of a DP shell whose nominal head is one of the masks *ass*, *butt*, *behind*, and so forth.

Such an analysis is sketched here (for purposes of exposition, this and following schematic analyses assume the presence of copies to indicate the positions where movements initiate).

(102) Ray stupid ass done got arrested.

- a. ... [DP [NP stupid ass]] ... Ray (→ Movement into larger DP)
- b. ... [DP Ray [NP stupid ass]] ... <Ray>

This account is intentionally vague as to the original position of *Ray*. One possibility, which is inconsistent with standard movement approaches to syntax, is that *Ray* originates in the same position (subject) that the shell in 102a ultimately occupies. This would be the strictest translation into transformational terms of the Johnson and Postal (1980) approach. Another possibility is that *Ray* originates in a position lower than the shell. In 102, for example, *Ray* would originate as the complement to the verb *arrested*, and move into the specifier of the shell DP that occupies spec-IP (see Collins 2007 for a more detailed minimalist account of how this movement takes place).

Consider how this proposal accounts for some of the outer properties of the ACC, in other words, those properties where the possessor DP of the ACC behaves as if it were not contained in the shell. For reasons of space, we do not give a comprehensive account of all the outer properties but focus only on the three in 100a, 100b, and 100g.

- (103) a. Michael<sub>1</sub> ass making of fool of himself<sub>1</sub>.
- b. \*Michael<sub>1</sub> sister making a fool of himself<sub>1</sub>.

Suppose one assumes that the right condition on this type of reflexive is along the lines of Principle A.<sup>25</sup> A reflexive must be bound in some local domain.<sup>26</sup> In this formulation, A binds B iff A c-commands B, and A and B are coindexed. In 103b, *Michael* cannot bind the reflexive because its position internal to the larger DP does not c-command the reflexive, which is external to that DP. Furthermore, there is no motivation for positing any level of syntactic structure in which *Michael* is external to its containing DP, so the reflexive in 103b is rightly excluded.

Now, while we have argued that camouflage case 103a has a final structure parallel to 103b, our fundamental assumption about the ACC is that the camouflaged DP originates external to the shell. Hence, in 103a there is a structural representation in which *Michael* and *himself* are both external to the shell DP and nothing precludes the possibility that AT THAT STAGE both are internal to some local domain suitable for proper reflexive antecedence. In this case, the local domain would be a minimal clause. Given that the reflexive pronoun is an object, it is further required only that the shell-external position of *Michael* be one capable of locally binding an object. The analysis can be sketched as in 104.

- (104) a. [DP ass] ... Michael ... himself (Principle A satisfied)
- b. [DP Michael ass] ... <Michael> ... himself

<sup>25</sup> Camouflage also poses a problem for the formulation of the binding theory in Pollard & Sag 1992 and 1994, which states: A locally o-commanded anaphor must be locally o-bound. The problem is that *Michael* in 103a is not on the SUBCAT of the predicate *making a fool of*, and so *Michael* does not o-command the reflexive. A similar issue arises in the binding theory presented in Reuland & Reinhart 1991 and Reinhart & Reuland 1993.

<sup>26</sup> This assumption is not necessary for our argument, and at least one of the authors rejects such a proposal; see Postal & Ross 2008. We believe that the essence of the explanatory result about reflexive antecedence is easily preserved in a view of reflexive antecedence that in no way appeals to c-command and hence is independent of conditions like Principle A.

What is the underlying position of *Michael* in 104? The most straightforward answer to this in the framework of principles and parameters/minimalism is that *Michael* originates in spec-VP and moves into the specifier of the shell DP, which occupies spec-IP. Since we are keeping the exposition informal, we do not pursue this suggestion (see Collins 2007).<sup>27</sup>

Viewed in these terms, there is every reason to assume that the external origin of a camouflaged DP and its movement into the shell in the ACC case properly accounts for the possibility of reflexive antecedence in 103a and, when combined with the LACK of external origin for the possessor in 103b, also accounts for the contrast between 103a and 103b.<sup>28</sup>

Consider now external property 100b, already considered in §4, and illustrated in data like 105.

- (105) a. \*Larry<sub>1</sub> (ass) aggravate him<sub>1</sub> all the time.  
b. Larry<sub>1</sub> mother aggravate him<sub>1</sub> all the time.

The problem is to explain why 105a is bad when 105b is good. Since we have claimed that 105a and b are superficially parallel, the violation in 105a must be due to the shell-external origin of *Larry*. The unanswered question then is why that violation, of Principle B or some analog, is not rescued by the camouflage. There are at least two possible answers. One is that reflexives are in effect mappings of regular pronouns that gain reflexive status under the locality conditions taken to license reflexives; see §10. And there is no analogous mechanism of dereflexivization. Hence since *Larry* and *him* would, in the structure of 105a, satisfy the locality conditions for reflexives, *him* obligatorily has reflexive status, ultimately forcing that example to end up as the grammatical 106.

- (106) Larry<sub>1</sub> ass done made himself<sub>1</sub> mad.

It then doesn't matter that *Larry* gets camouflaged and ends up superficially parallel in 105a to 105b. This approach is of course incompatible with the post-1981 transformational trend associated with the introduction of the binding principles, which takes ideas like 'anaphor' and 'pronoun' to be in essence primitives, so that the idea of pronouns mapping to reflexives is not defined.

Alternatively, in a framework that appeals to traces (copies), 105a would, under the external-origin view of camouflage, have the following derivation, where there is a violation of Principle B in both structures.

- (107) a. ... ass ... Larry<sub>1</sub> ... aggravate ... him<sub>1</sub>  
b. [Larry<sub>1</sub> ass] ... <Larry<sub>1</sub>> ... aggravate ... him<sub>1</sub>

<sup>27</sup> The movement account of camouflage requires that when an ACC is a subject, direct object, object of a preposition, and so forth there is always a position lower than the ACC from which the ACC possessor can raise (see Collins 2007). The account in Johnson & Postal 1980 takes the possessor to originally have the same functional status that the resulting ACC has, for example, subject, direct object, and so forth. To keep the presentation informal, we do not pursue such issues here.

<sup>28</sup> A referee suggests that the acceptability of 103a, where the possessor of the ACC binds the reflexive, can be accounted for in the same way that Zribi-Hertz (1989) accounts for cases of unbound reflexive pronouns in English. This is quite unlikely given that in her examples, a reflexive can always alternate with a nonreflexive pronoun, whereas in ours a nonreflexive pronoun anteceded by the possessor of the ACC is barred; see (ia,b), from Zribi-Hertz 1989:718, exx. 73d and 73g.

- (i) a. John's misbehaviour drew upon himself and his family the hostility of the whole neighbourhood.  
(... drew upon him ...)  
b. John's impulsiveness rebounded against himself. (... rebounded against him ...)

Once again, on the principles-and-parameters/minimalist approach to syntax, it is natural to assume that the position of *Larry* (before its displacement into the possessor position of the ACC) is spec-VP.

Finally, consider selectional properties (see 100g). By selectional properties we mean those that a predicate has that require its arguments to have certain semantic features, such as animacy. The possessor of the ACC satisfies (or fails to satisfy) all selectional properties of any predicate that an uncamouflaged DP in the shell position would. Consider 108 and 109.

- (108) a. Frank shy.
- b. Frank ass shy.
- (109) a. \*Frank buttocks shy.
- b. \*Frank ASS shy.

The predicate adjective *shy* requires that its unique argument be animate. This selectional property accounts for the distinction between 108b and 109b. As shown in 108b, a camouflaged DP satisfies the selection property of *shy*. Therefore, for the purpose of selection, the possessor of an ACC behaves as if it were external to the ACC DP. Example 109b shows that when *ass* is stressed, it cannot be the semantically vacuous mask, but rather is forced to be the lexical item that is synonymous with *buttocks*. As predicted, on this interpretation, the possessor of *ass* cannot satisfy the selection properties of the predicate.

We turn to the internal properties of the ACC. Once again, for reasons of space, we do not attempt an account of all the inner properties, but rather focus on the central fact that for finite verbs, agreement is with the shell DP, and not with the possessor (see 101b). Relevant data is repeated in 110.

- (110) a. Are you crazy?
- b. \*Are your ass crazy?
- c. Is your ass crazy?

To account for such facts, we make the assumption that finite-clause verb agreement is determined by the subject. For example, in principles and parameters/minimalism, it is usually the case that the finite verb agrees with the DP in spec-IP (putting aside expletive constructions where *there* is the subject). In relational grammar, the verb agrees with the final-1. In 110a, the copula agrees with the subject *you*, determining *are* as the appropriate form. In 110b, *your* is the possessor of *your ass*, which is the clausal subject. Therefore, the copula does not agree with *your*.

**8.1. C-COMMAND AND CAMOUFLAGE.** If the overall analytic proposal that assigns a shell-external origin to the possessor of the ACC is correct, one conclusion is that the widely accepted constraint on movement in 111 is untenable.

- (111) If DP<sub>1</sub> moves from position A to position B, then the occurrence of DP<sub>1</sub> in B c-commands A.

This condition has been one of the foundations of the principles-and-parameters conception of syntax, and has been incorporated into minimalist theorizing as well. The ACC data and the less parochial crosslinguistic data concerning camouflage constructions surveyed in §11 appear to seriously threaten the validity of this principle.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> In dropping 111, our analysis agrees partially with Bobaljik and Brown (1997) and Nunes (2001), who also deny that 111 holds on movement operations. For these authors, a constituent can move interarborally, and hence to a noncommanding position. We differ from them in that for the camouflage case, 111 does not hold at any stage.

If condition 111 is abandoned, a number of issues will have to be rethought in the principles-and-parameters/minimalist framework. It is beyond the scope of this article to consider the consequences of dropping 111, but we list a number of relevant issues (see Collins 2007 for more discussion). First, how can cases of downward movement be blocked if 111 is dropped? Second, if the spell-out of the copy left by movement crucially involves the notion of c-command (as in Nunes 2001), how can the copy left by movement into the possessor position of an ACC shell be spelled out correctly? Third, Kayne (1994) proposes that the linear correspondence axiom in conjunction with 111 prevents rightward movement. If 111 is abandoned, does that imply that rightward movement is allowed?

**9. THE RESUMPTIVE-*with* CONSTRUCTION.** In this section we consider the role of the ACC in the syntax of what we call the RESUMPTIVE-*with* CONSTRUCTION in AAE, illustrated in 112.

- (112) a. She need to sit down with her stupid ass.  
 b. She need to go to school with her stupid ass.  
 c. She the one sat down and ate that whole pie with her greedy ass.  
 d. She still wanna marry him with her stupid ass.  
 e. Sit down with your bad behind!  
 f. Do not let your dispatcher, with her non-English-speaking ass, dispatch me. (unelicited, in the context of soldiers being dispatched in Iraq)  
 g. Mama with her old tail finna have a baby. You know how bad that look.

As far as we know, this construction, which has no analog in standard English, has not previously been documented as a feature of AAE syntax. The construction has several distinctive properties. First, the defining PP headed by *with* does not contribute to the truth-functionally relevant meaning. Suppressing it in 112a yields a clause with the same meaning as *Her stupid ass need to sit down*, which in turn entails *She need to sit down*. Second, the construction has a characteristic intonation. Up to the *with*-phrase, such sentences are pronounced with normal intonation, but the *with*-phrase itself has a flatter and lower intonation. Third, the only preposition that can be used is *with*. Fourth, the post-*with* DP in the resumptive-*with* construction must have a pronominal possessor whose antecedent is a clausemate DP (see below). Fifth, the head noun of the DP must be one of the licit AAE masks. Since the sentences in 113 fail to meet one or more of these conditions, they have only a comitative interpretation, where the *with*-phrase DP refers to somebody different from the subject.

- (113) a. She need to sit down with Lois.  
 b. She need to sit down with her.  
 c. She need to sit down with her mother.  
 d. She need to sit down with Frank stupid ass.

Ordinary comitatives differ from the resumptive-*with* phrase in another way. Comitatives are roughly equivalent semantically to coordinate structures.

- (114) a. Mary<sub>1</sub> sat down with her<sub>1</sub> mother.  
 b. Mary<sub>1</sub> and her<sub>1</sub> mother sat down.

But evidently, no such equivalence holds in the case of the resumptive-*with* construction.

- (115) a. Mary<sub>1</sub> need to sit down with her<sub>1</sub> dumb ass.  
 b. Mary<sub>1</sub> and her<sub>2</sub>/\*her<sub>1</sub> dumb ass need to sit down.

Because of the constraint discussed in connection with 54 above, 115b cannot be analyzed such that *Mary* antecedes *her*. These two DPs must have distinct denotations,



precluding 115b from being equivalent to 115a. Therefore, there is good reason to distinguish the resumptive-*with* construction from the common use of a comitative PP.

Sixth and last, the adjective modifying the mask in the resumptive-*with* construction is obligatory.<sup>30</sup>

- (116) a. \*She<sub>1</sub> need to sit down with her<sub>1</sub> ass.  
 b. \*She<sub>1</sub> need to go to school with her<sub>1</sub> ass.  
 c. \*Sit down with your behind.

Summarizing, the general form of the resumptive-*with* construction is as in 117.

- (117) DP<sub>1</sub> . . . with [DP pronoun<sub>1</sub> Adj [NP mask]]

There are complex conditions on the choice of the antecedent of the pronoun in the resumptive-*with* construction. While the antecedent in the preceding examples has always been the subject, not all subjects are legitimate antecedents. The following examples suggest that when the antecedent is a subject, the person the subject refers to must be responsible in some way for the action.

- (118) a. He fell down with his stupid ass.  
 b. Ray gon get arrested with his stupid ass.  
 c. \*He fainted/passed out with his stupid ass.  
 d. \*He fainted with his hungry ass.  
 e. \*Clara was born with her stupid ass.

In 118a, the falling down is understood as done on purpose, as a prankster would do. Similarly, in 118b, the arrest is the result of Ray's own activities. In 118c,d,e, the verbal meanings preclude interpreting the subject as referring to a responsible actor and the result is unacceptable. Clearly much more work is needed on this constraint; we do not pursue it here for reasons of space.

While a clausal subject is a possible antecedent, a possessor is not. The PP in 119b can be interpreted only as a comitative, since the antecedent of the pronoun is the possessor of the subject DP.

- (119) a. Jane daddy<sub>1</sub> need to sit down with his<sub>1</sub> stupid ass or we gon have some problems.  
 b. Jane<sub>1</sub> daddy need to sit down with her<sub>1</sub> stupid ass or we gon have some problems.

The following examples show that the resumptive-*with* construction can be associated with an object of a verb or preposition.

- (120) a. Everybody loved him with his old geeky looking butt. (unelicited)  
 b. They should take away his license (from him) with his drunk drivin' ass.  
 c. She ain't gonna marry him with his no money havin'/broke ass.  
 d. . . . dealing with that Italian chick with her phony butt (unelicited)

In 120b, the prepositional phrase *from him* is optional. But given the meaning of *take away*, we assume the syntactic presence of such a phrase whether it is pronounced

<sup>30</sup> In many cases the adjective in the resumptive-*with* construction is derogatory, but the following are acceptable (see §10 on *self* as a mask). Note in particular that *bad* does not have a derogatory sense in (iv) and (v).

- (i) Any woman would want to marry Bill Gates with his rich ass.  
 (ii) You something else with your cute self.  
 (iii) Come on over here with your fine self.  
 (iv) Go ahead on with your bad self.  
 (v) Do your thing with your bad self.

or not.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, even in the short version of 120b, we take the pronoun in the resumptive-*with* construction to be anteceded by the prepositional object, not by the possessor of *license*.<sup>32</sup>

In some cases where the DP of the resumptive-*with* construction appears to be in relation to an object, the object has either raised into object position (121a), or is the controller of the subject of the embedded infinitival clause (121b).

- (121) a. She need to make her son go to work with his lazy ass.  
 b. She need to tell her son to get a job with his lazy ass.

What then could be a plausible analysis of the resumptive-*with* construction? Viewing this as a subcase of the ACC, we advance the following informal hypotheses. Cases like 112 should be analyzed in terms of POSSESSOR RAISING, specifically, a type of possessor raising that obligatorily links to a resumptive pronoun in the possessor position. In other words, we suggest treating the relation between the subject *Judy* and the possessor pronoun in *her stupid ass* in 122a as similar to that between the subject and the possessor pronoun in examples like 122b (from colloquial standard English).

- (122) a. Judy need to sit down with her stupid ass.  
 b. Judy looks/seems/sounds as if/like her arm is hurting.

Given the informal movement analysis sketched in the previous section, a derivation would look very roughly something like 123.<sup>33</sup>

- (123) a. Mary need to sit down.  
       → camouflage of *Mary*  
 b. Mary stupid ass need to sit down.  
       → insertion of *with*, and postposing of subject  
 c. need to sit down with Mary stupid ass.  
       → raising of *Mary* to subject position, linked to a resumptive pronoun  
 d. Mary need to sit down with her stupid ass.

This derivation accounts for the necessary anaphoric link between the possessor of the ACC in the resumptive-*with* construction and some clausemate of the ACC. A rather remarkable consequence follows from the possessor-raising analysis of the resumptive-*with* construction when this combines with our earlier assumptions about the ACC proper. Specifically, the latter assumed that the possessor DP originates external to the shell DP headed by the mask and is moved into the shell. The current hypothesis posits that such a moved DP can on occasion then raise out of it. This proposal recalls in abstract terms the sort of analysis that Pullum (1976) referred to as the Duke-of-York gambit, a grammatical state of affairs in which some form is analyzed as having charac-

<sup>31</sup> The proposal in the text is distinct from a deletion analysis like that relevant for sluicing and VP-deletion in English (on implicit arguments, see Collins 2005, and references cited therein).

<sup>32</sup> A referee claims the following are acceptable.

- (i) Look at his shorts, with his old skinny chicken leg ass!  
 (ii) Look at those shorts [pointing to the wearer's shorts], with his old skinny chicken leg ass!

For SM, neither sounds completely natural or as good as (iii).

- (iii) Look at him in those shorts with his old skinny chicken leg ass!

The topic deserves further research.

<sup>33</sup> The derivation in 123 is meant to be informal. For example, we do not articulate the landing site of postposing in 123c. See Collins 2005 for an analysis of the passive in standard English that may provide a way to understand the subject postposing step in the resumptive-*with* construction without appeal to rightward movement.

teristic A, subsequently as having B distinct from A, and then once more as having A. In our terms, A is the property of a fixed DP being external to some given ACC shell.

**10. ON *self* AS A MASK.** As observed earlier (see 9 and 10), an ACC can be formed with other masks besides *ass*, including *butt* and *behind*. And referring again to the quote from Spears 1998 in §1, *self* sometimes seems to alternate with such masks (124 repeats 2 above).

(124) Get your triflin' ass out of here. (= Get your triflin' self out of here.)

The alternation of *self* with *ass* in 124 raises the possibility that *self* is also an ACC mask. We argue in this section that some occurrences of *self* are indeed ACC masks, parallel to the others. But we also provide evidence that not all occurrences of this form are ACC masks. Rather, *self* is sometimes part of a distinct reflexive construction, with a syntactic distribution parallel to the standard English reflexive-*self*. Disentangling these two uses of AAE *self* (ACC camouflage vs. reflexive) and comparing the reflexive use of *self* in AAE to the standard English reflexive are the objectives of this section.

Many aspects of the syntactic distribution of *self* parallel those of other ACC masks. For example, *self* can appear in subject position, although it is sometimes marginal there, for reasons that are unclear to us (a pause between *self* and the verb ameliorates the sentence).

(125) You know what, my dumb self forgot to save it. (unelicited)

(126) a. Her uppity ass/?self act like she too good to speak to us.

b. Her stupid ass/self done got Ray arrested.

Moreover, just like the other masks, *self* appears in the resumptive-*with* construction.<sup>34</sup>

(127) a. She need to sit down with her stupid self.

b. She still wanna marry him with her stupid self.

c. Sit down with your loud self!

d. Everybody loved him with his old geeky looking self.

e. So here she goes with her li'l slick self. (unelicited)

f. Person A: I don't know why he keep harassing me. (unelicited)

Person B: with his slow self. (unelicited)

g. Fancy, with her ugly self, she don't never play in nothing. (unelicited)

Lastly, *self* can appear as the object of a verb or preposition. Spears's example in 2 already illustrated the point; 128 contains further examples.

<sup>34</sup> Sentences (i)–(v) are probably examples of the resumptive-*with* construction with the preposition and/or the possessor elided.

(i) You think you something laid up with him? Li'l hungry self. (unelicited)

(ii) Who finna take care of you? Nasty behind self. (unelicited)

(iii) Did you see Bernard? Li'l fat stubby self. (unelicited)

(iv) Ol' Big Mike he just there to eat. His big ass. (unelicited)

(v) I walked in and all them old ladies looking. They old behind. (unelicited)

A referee claims that (i) would not be good with *ass* substituting for *self*: *Li'l hungry ass*. This opinion is not shared by SM. Obviously, we have just scratched the surface on sentences like (i)–(v).

In the following pairs of sentences, the *self* seems optional.

(vi) Go sit down with your stank breath! (unelicited)

(vi') Go sit down with your stank breath self!

A speculation about (vii) is that it involves both a null *self* and a null *have*.

(vii) Yo! I will rock your joint, with your little S-curl. (unelicited)

(vii') Yo! I will rock your joint, with your little S-curl having/wearing self.

- (128) a. You bring that shit on your own self. (unelicited)  
 b. You can't hardly feed your own self. (unelicited)  
 c. You trying to save it all for your damn self. (unelicited)

Parallel examples with other masks have already been illustrated and further instances are seen in 129.

- (129) a. I just told him<sub>1</sub> about his<sub>1</sub> ass. (unelicited)  
 b. Them teenagers, they<sub>1</sub> got they<sub>1</sub> ass arrested. (unelicited)  
 c. He<sub>1</sub> done calmed his<sub>1</sub> ass down now. (unelicited)  
 d. I'm setting my own ass on fire. (unelicited)

But despite these genuine parallels between *self* and other ACC masks, there are some clear contrasts. When *self* appears as a head noun of a NONSUBJECT DP, its possessor obligatorily has a clause-mate antecedent; other ACC mask possessors obey no such restriction; see 130–32.

- (130) a. \*They done arrested her stupid self.  
 b. \*They done arrested herself.  
 c. They done arrested her (stupid) ass.  
 (131) a. \*I'm gonna sue her stupid self.  
 b. \*I'm gonna sue herself.  
 c. I'm gonna sue her (stupid) ass.  
 (132) a. \*How come she talkin' to your ugly self?  
 b. \*How come she talkin' to yourself?  
 c. How come she talkin' to your (ugly) ass?

A similar contrast between *self* and other ACC masks appears when the possessor is nonpronominal. These facts naturally lead to generalization 134.

- (133) a. Ray stupid ass/?self done got arrested.  
 b. They done arrested Ray stupid ass/\*self.  
 c. I'm gonna sue Mary stupid ass/\*self.

- (134) The possessor of nonsubject *self* must have a clause-mate antecedent.

Generalization 134 accounts for the ungrammaticality of examples 130a, 131a, and 132a as well as of that of the *self* variants in 133b,c, and for the contrast of the former three with, respectively, 130c, 131c, and 132c, given the null hypothesis that none of the other ACC masks is subject to a constraint parallel to 134.

We propose that subject instances of *self* (in 125 and 126) in AAE are ACC masks. Like other subject position masks, *self* (as a subject mask) does not fall under 134. But with the exception of its occurrence in the resumptive-*with* construction, to be discussed shortly, there are no other AAE cases of *self* as an ACC mask. We have no explanation for the restricted distribution of *self* as an ACC mask.

We claim that instances of *self* found in ordinary object positions, such as 128, are not ACC masks. Rather, they represent a type of reflexive construction, subject to 134. We call this latter use reflexive-*self*. One can outline further differences between reflexive-*self* and ACC masks such as *ass*. First, reflexive-*self* can appear in 'adverbial' reflexives with *by*, whereas the other ACC masks cannot.

- (135) a. He did it by his own self/by hisself.  
 b. \*He did it by his (own) ass.  
 (136) a. You gon hafta clean that up by your own self/by yourself.  
 b. \*You gon hafta clean that up by your (own) ass.

Data like 135 and 136 support the assumption that nonsubject *self* is not an ACC mask, since it has a syntactic distribution significantly different from the other ACC masks.<sup>35</sup>

Second, there are emphatic structures that are fine with *self*, but not with other ACC masks.<sup>36</sup>

- (137) a. He don't stay in them places long. (unelicited)  
           Or he come out his own self.  
       b. \*... Or he come out his own ass.

A third argument against the assumption that nonsubject *self* is an ACC mask derives from the reciprocal *each other*.

- (138) a. They ain't never gonna vote for each other ass/asses.  
       b. \*They ain't never gonna vote for each other self/selves.  
       c. \*They ain't never gonna vote for each other stupid/own selves/self.

Since the ungrammatical 138b and c satisfy generalization 134 as much as the grammatical 138a does, 134 cannot explain the contrast between *self* and other ACC masks in this environment. So if, contrary to our position, one were to take object occurrences of [possessor + *self*] in AAE to be instances of the ACC, the contrast between 138a and b would require a further special constraint, precluding the ACC with a reciprocal possessor just when the mask is *self*.

Given our assumption that object instances of *self* represent reflexive constructions, 138b,c may follow from the same independently existing constraint that distinguishes 139a,b in standard English (see 149 below).

- (139) a. Those singers embarrassed themselves.  
       b. \*Those singers embarrassed each other-selves.

To summarize, we claim that AAE has (at least) two distinct uses of *self*: there is the ACC mask *self*, which appears in subject position and only one other environment discussed directly below. And there is reflexive-*self*. Only the latter is in general allowed as the object of a verb or the object of a preposition. Reflexive-*self* is subject to condition 134 and to an independent constraint holding for both standard English and AAE determining that the element associated with reflexive-*self* is restricted to a form drawn from the set of pronominals.

The assumption that AAE has two different constructions with *self* raises the question of which one is found in the resumptive-*with* construction: the ACC mask *self*, or instances of reflexive-*self*. Relevant evidence is provided by the fact noted earlier (see 116) that the resumptive-*with* construction requires the presence of a modifier. This constraint is illustrated for the *self* case in 140.

- (140) a. She need to go to school with her stupid self.  
       b. \*She need to go to school with herself.

<sup>35</sup> A cloudy area involves the possibility of ACC DPs as the objects of inherently reflexive verbs. Beavers and Koontz-Garboden (2006a:509) cite (i).

(i) You better know how to behave your ass!

While SM finds (i) fairly acceptable, (ii) is not so good.

(ii) \*Behave your ass!

(iii) Behave yourself!

Furthermore, we have found one middle-aged AAE speaker who accepts (ii). Since the area is murky, we do not treat it any further.

<sup>36</sup> A perhaps related emphatic construction illustrates the same point.

(i) Jane herself/\*her ass done quit.

The fact that a simple reflexive is not possible in the resumptive-*with* construction argues that it does not represent an instance of the reflexive use of *self*. Combined with the requirement that a modifier is obligatory with *self* in the resumptive-*with* construction, this strongly suggests that the occurrences of *self* in this construction are ACC masks. As noted in §9, the other ACC masks that appear in the resumptive-*with* construction are all subject to the same requirement (141 repeats 116 above).

- (141) a. \*She<sub>1</sub> need to sit down with her<sub>1</sub> ass.  
 b. \*She<sub>1</sub> need to go to school with her<sub>1</sub> ass.  
 c. \*Sit down with your behind.

The data here not only show that *self* occurrences in the resumptive-*with* construction are instances of the ACC, but they also argue against the possibility that such occurrences might ambiguously represent both the ACC and reflexive *self*.

A further distinctive characteristic of *self* as an ACC mask is that it must also occur with a modifier in subject position. None of the other masks are subject to such a requirement.

- (142) a. His (stupid) ass gonna get sued.  
 b. His stupid self in trouble now.  
 c. \*Hissself in trouble now.  
 (143) a. Her (stupid) ass done got Ray arrested.  
 b. Her stupid self done got Ray arrested.  
 c. \*Herself done got Ray arrested.

So, in the two environments where *self* is an ACC mask, it requires the presence of a modifier, yielding generalization 144.

- (144) An ACC shell DP containing *self* as a mask must contain a modifier.

When *self* is used as the object of a verb or the object of a preposition, no analogous constraint holds. As the following examples show, there are two variants of reflexive-*self*: a compound form, and a form including a modifier.

- (145) a. You trying to save it all for your damn self.  
 b. You trying to save it all for yourself.  
 (146) a. You can't hardly feed your own self.  
 b. You can't hardly feed yourself.  
 (147) a. Willie<sub>1</sub> need to take care of his<sub>1</sub> old lazy self.  
 b. Willie<sub>1</sub> need to take care of hisself<sub>1</sub>.

The difference between standard English and AAE in this area might then simply be this: whereas standard English REQUIRES its reflexive *self* forms to be single words, this is optional for AAE. The hypotheses distinguishing standard English and AAE with respect to reflexive-*self* are then the following.<sup>37</sup>

- (148) a. In standard English, reflexive-*self* and its possessor OBLIGATORILY form a single word, and hence modifying adjectives are excluded.  
 b. In AAE, reflexive-*self* and its possessor OPTIONALLY form a single word. More precisely, that is required if and only if there is no modifying adjective.

Although it is not at all necessary for our current analysis of the ACC, one could speculate that object *self* DPs in both standard English and AAE (for both the single

<sup>37</sup> We put aside the following sentence type from colloquial standard English that also allows *self* to be separated from the pronominal possessor.

(i) He is just being his usual (picky) self today.

word and multiword cases) are also instances of a type of camouflage, DISTINCT FROM THE ACC, and having the unique mask *self/selves*. See Helke 1970 for related ideas. Note that such forms have the key diagnostics of a camouflage structure: they contain a possessor, and there is a noun analyzable as a mask that can be regarded as making no truth-functional contribution to the meaning of sentences containing it. See §12 for remarks on the crosslinguistic commonality of reflexive camouflage usages, especially with body-part nouns.

As a highly simplified first approximation, and limiting attention to the core case of reflexivization in minimal clauses, one might specify the reflexive camouflage as follows.<sup>38</sup>

- (149) B camouflages with reflexive-self if and only if  
 a. B is a (nonreciprocal) pronoun with antecedent A, and  
 b. A is a clausemate of B.<sup>39</sup>

Statement 149 would properly determine that 150a is unacceptable, while 150b is acceptable as reflexive camouflage. Furthermore, 150c is acceptable, and reflexive camouflage is impossible in 150d.

- (150) a. \*Ryan<sub>1</sub> bragged about him<sub>1</sub>.  
 b. Ryan<sub>1</sub> bragged about himself<sub>1</sub>.  
 c. Ryan<sub>1</sub> doubts that you love him<sub>1</sub>.  
 d. \*Ryan<sub>1</sub> doubts that you love himself<sub>1</sub>.

And 149 blocks 151a,b where B is not an appropriate pronominal form.

- (151) a. \*Frank bragged about Joan('s) self.  
 b. \*Those friends bragged about each other('s) self/selves.

An argument favoring a camouflage view of English reflexive forms (in both standard English and AAE) involves the pluralization facts for *selves*. As pointed out earlier in 35, in general possessed nouns do NOT show number concord with their possessors. But as Beavers and Koontz-Garboden (2006a) observed, the ACC mask can optionally manifest that (see 33). In standard English, there is of course a pattern that looks like obligatory number concord in the single word reflexive forms, one we are unfamiliar with any analysis of.<sup>40</sup>

- (152) a. my/your(singular)/his/her/one + self/\*selves  
 b. our/your(plural)/their + \*self/selves

And, notably, in AAE, as already indicated, the OPTIONAL concord also manifests in both compound and noncompound reflexives (see 34). This suggests that a condition governing both standard English and AAE is that given in 153.

<sup>38</sup> Example (i) is blocked by 149 since underlyingly *his* is seemingly wrongly a clausemate of *Willie*, but does not undergo reflexive camouflage.

(i) Willie<sub>1</sub> need to take care of his<sub>1</sub> (\*self) ass.

One possibility is to assume that *his* has undergone reflexive camouflage in (i), but (following McCawley 1998) the genitive *his* fails to manifest a reflexive/nonreflexive morphological contrast.

<sup>39</sup> The formulation in 149 of course fails to take into account various phenomena such as long-distance reflexives like that in (i) below (standard English). Treatment of such matters is beyond the scope of this study.

(i) Dr. Harrison<sub>1</sub> thought that no one but him(self)<sub>1</sub> could perform the operation.

<sup>40</sup> Joseph (1979) discusses the example in (i), usable for instance in the context of nurse to single patient.

(i) We seem a bit displeased with ourself, don't we?

The form of the possessor part of the reflexive *ourself* is determined by the morphosyntactic features of the antecedent *we*, but the number of *self* is determined by the semantic referent of the antecedent *we*.

- (153) Number concord between a noun N and DP<sub>x</sub> is possible in [DP DP<sub>x</sub> [NP (Adjective Phrase) N]] only if N is a mask.

But this generalization evidently requires treating reflexives as camouflage structures in both standard English and AAE.<sup>41</sup>

We conclude this section with brief notes on the complex role of *own*, which is often found in AAE DPs when *self* is the head noun with a possessor DP. As noted above, the possessors of both *ass* and *self* can be bound by a subject.

- (154) a. Willie<sub>1</sub> need to take care of his<sub>1,2</sub> ass.  
 b. Willie<sub>1</sub> need to take care of himself<sub>1</sub>.  
 (155) a. I'm gonna buy my ass a computer.  
 b. I'm gonna buy myself a computer.

While 154a and 155a are acceptable, it is not always possible to use the ACC mask *ass* in a bound object position. Consider 156, which illustrates the binding possibilities for a third-person singular ACC possessor with and without *own*.

- (156) a. Willie<sub>1</sub> voted for his<sub>2</sub>/\*his<sub>1</sub> ass.  
 b. Willie<sub>1</sub> voted for his<sub>1</sub>/\*his<sub>2</sub> own ass.

Without *own*, the subject cannot antecede the pronoun possessor of the ACC object, but with *own* the subject must antecede it. Similarly, while 154 is possible without *own*, when it is added, the interpretative possibilities are restricted.

- (157) a. Willie<sub>1</sub> need to take care of his<sub>1</sub> own ass/self.  
 b. \*Willie<sub>1</sub> need to take care of his<sub>2</sub> own ass/self.

While *own* requires an object possessor to be bound, no such effect is found when it is associated with a subject possessor.

- (158) a. His (own) ass in trouble.  
 b. Ray (own) ass done got arrested.

These cases seem natural only in contrastive contexts and require strong stress on *own*. At this point, we lack insights into the properties of such forms.<sup>42</sup>

**11. ALTERNATIVES.** In this section, we briefly discuss two alternatives to our analysis of camouflage based on movement. A key point of both alternatives is that the ACC shell itself plays the role of antecedent, and hence it becomes possible to reject our idea that the possessor of the ACC is the antecedent of reflexives and pronouns. Since the possessor does not need to be an antecedent, there would be no motivation (based on anaphora) for a movement approach to camouflage.

In the first approach, the form of a reflexive pronoun like *yourself* is determined directly on the basis of what it refers to.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>41</sup> The fact that honorific forms like those in (i) manifest number concord with possessors suggests a camouflage analysis for these structures (similarly for *your lordship/highness*, etc.).

(i) a. her majesty/\*majesties  
 b. their \*majesty/majesties

<sup>42</sup> *Own* is not possible in the resumptive-*with* construction, which is probably explained by the fact that *own* requires a contrast.

(i) Mary need to sit down with her dumb self.  
 (ii) \*Mary need to sit down with her own self.  
 (iii) \*Mary need to sit down with her own dumb self.

<sup>43</sup> Thanks to Roger Schwarzschild for discussing these issues with us.



(159) Your ass lyin' to yourself.

Suppose, contrary to our approach, that this example does not involve camouflage movement of the pronoun *you* into the possessor position. Second, suppose that the second-person singular reflexive pronoun *yourself* has the (semantic) requirement that it refers to the addressee. Third, suppose that the DP *your ass* refers to the addressee and that the antecedent of *yourself* is not the possessor (as in our account), but rather the DP *your ass*. Under this account, the reflexive *yourself* is bound by *your ass*, so binding Principle A (or an analog) can be satisfied. Furthermore, the (semantic) requirement that *yourself* refer to the addressee is satisfied since *your ass* refers to the addressee.

The second approach is inspired by Kathol's (1999) proposal that there are two different forms of agreement corresponding to two different types of features.<sup>44</sup>

- (160) a. morphosyntactic: AGR(selector) = AGR(arg)  
 b. semantic: AGR(selector) = INDEX(arg)

On this approach, the DP *your ass* in 159 has two sets of agreement features: the HEAD|AGR features are third-person singular, whereas the CONT|INDEX features are second-person singular. The HEAD|AGR features determine subject-verb agreement, and the CONT|INDEX features determine the form of an anaphor bound by the ACC. A referee frames the distinction between the two sets of features in the following way: 'On the basis of the built-in distinction between agreement and semantic (and therefore anaphoric) properties, the phenomena enumerated by the authors conform to a treatment in which the semantic (but not the morphosyntactic categorical) properties of the entire possessive NP are determined by the semantic content of the possessor'.

The problem with both alternative views of the ACC anaphoric facts is that the idea that agreement of anaphoric elements with their antecedents can be characterized in semantic terms is untenable, independent of any considerations having to do with camouflage.

We argue this from the syntax of *yours truly*, which has a meaning equivalent to that of a first-person singular pronoun (expressions such as *this reporter* and *the new me* have similar properties).<sup>45</sup>

- (161) Yours truly would never do that.  
 'I would never do that.'

Consider *yours truly* in terms of the two alternatives presented above. In the first, the form of the anaphor is determined directly by its semantic properties. Since *myself* refers to the speaker, it should be able to take *yours truly* as an antecedent, since *yours truly* also refers to the speaker. As example 162 shows, this prediction is not borne out. In the approach based on Kathol 1999, the CONT|INDEX feature of *yours truly* would be first-person singular, just as that of a first-person pronominal, and it should therefore be able to antecede *myself*, again the wrong prediction.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Thanks to Robert Levine for suggesting this alternative to us.

<sup>45</sup> But the well-known ban on a pronoun following a particle shows the expression is not a pronoun.

(i) a. They picked yours truly/me out easily.  
 b. They picked out yours truly/\*me easily.

<sup>46</sup> There are many internet citations of the following kind.

(i) If yours truly does say so myself.  
 (ii) Yours truly enjoying myself in a fire hydrant on my block.

The topic deserves further study.

- (162) a. Yours truly<sub>1</sub> understands himself<sub>1</sub>/\*myself<sub>1</sub>.  
 b. Yours truly<sub>1</sub> understands his<sub>1</sub>/\*my<sub>1</sub> inner desires.

It is, moreover, futile to seek some ‘subtle’ meaning difference between, for example, *yours truly* and *I*. For the amazing fact is that in certain contexts, such a form can at once antecede both a third-person and a first-person pronominal form.

- (163) a. PRO<sub>1</sub> to cover myself<sub>1</sub> in case of an investigation, yours truly<sub>1</sub> is going to keep himself<sub>1</sub> out of the newspapers.  
 b. Frank and yours truly<sub>1</sub>, who is not worried about her<sub>1</sub> weight, love to treat ourselves<sub>1</sub>/themselves<sub>1</sub> to ice cream.

In 163a, *yours truly* as the subject of the main clause controls PRO of the preceding embedded clause, which binds a first-person singular pronoun. In 163b, *yours truly* as second conjunct forces the reflexive bound by the conjoined structure to be first-person plural but also antecedes the third-person pronoun *her*.

A variety of other cases support the implications from *yours truly*. One is provided by the use of *we* to mean *you* (singular) noted in Joseph 1979 and illustrated in n. 40. Here too the meaning of course fails to determine the morphological shape of a reflexive.

- (164) Are we<sub>1</sub> taking good care of ourself<sub>1</sub>/\*yourself<sub>1</sub> today?

Crucially, in this example the use of *self* instead of *selves* shows that the referent of *we* is singular. This observation is supported by the fact that quantifier floating is not possible with singular second-person *we*.

- (165) a. Are we all taking good care of ourselves?  
 b. \*Are we all taking good care of ourself?

A similar argument arises from the morphological contrast but semantic identity between generic *one* and the use of *you* equivalent to it.

- (166) a. if one<sub>1</sub> is kind to one’s<sub>1</sub>/\*your<sub>1</sub> dog  
 b. if you<sub>1</sub> are kind to your<sub>1</sub>/\*one’s<sub>1</sub> dog

Such cases indicate that the shape of a pronominal form anteceded by one of the generic forms is determined in part by the morphological features of the antecedent, not merely by its meaning (for related cases see Heim 2005, Postal 1998:Ch. 5).

Consider also the distribution of singular *they*.

- (167) a. Somebody<sub>1</sub> said that they are helping themselves<sub>1</sub>/themselves<sub>1</sub>.  
 b. Somebody<sub>1</sub> said that he is helping himself<sub>1</sub>.  
 c. \*Somebody<sub>1</sub> said that they is/are helping himself<sub>1</sub>.  
 d. \*Somebody<sub>1</sub> said that he is helping themselves<sub>1</sub>/themselves<sub>1</sub>.

It is well known (see Lagunoff 1997) that *somebody* can be the antecedent of a singular pronoun like *he* or a plural (by the verb agreement test) pronoun of the set {*they*, *them*, *their*, *themselves*, *themselves*}. Examples 167c and 167d show that singular *they* cannot antecede the singular reflexive pronoun *himself* and that a singular pronoun cannot antecede either reflexive variant of singular *they*. It is unclear how to account for these facts if the semantic properties of an antecedent determined the form of a reflexive.

Let us stress that what we have just done is NOT to argue that only a camouflage analysis can capture the anaphoric facts. More restrictedly, we have shown only that what appears to be a broadly assumed intuitive view that anaphoric agreement is determined by meanings is as such not a viable view and hence cannot be used to overturn our analysis.



The key is that 170c expresses the meaning of the ungrammatical 170b. In the terminology we have introduced, one can characterize the facts as in 171.

- (171) In Georgian, a DP X is camouflaged with a mask *tav* if and only if X is a nonthird-person (pronominal) direct object cooccurring with an indirect object.

There is one notable difference between the Georgian camouflage construction and the ACC. Georgian reveals an environment in which the camouflage of a simple DP is obligatory, namely, when that DP is a nonthird-person direct object in a clause with an indirect object. In general, ACC camouflage in AAE is optional.

The obligatory character of Georgian camouflage represented by the biconditional in 171 provides an interesting argument for the kind of analysis of camouflage advocated here; specifically, it supports it against approaches like the semantic-based alternatives discussed earlier. The point is that such analyses can at best describe the camouflaged structure itself; but they provide no way we can discern to link the existence of that structure to the fact that both paradigmatically and semantically it fills the gap in the distribution of nonthird-person direct object pronouns, that is, that they cannot occur with an indirect object. Any such treatment appears to turn what 171 treats as one unified phenomenon into two merely accidentally related features.

Consider now the French camouflage structure based on the mask *pomme*, otherwise a noun meaning ‘apple’. The examples in 172 are from the Harper Collins Robert French dictionary; the examples in 173 are from a Google search.<sup>47</sup>

- (172) a. C’est pour ma pomme.  
           it.is for my apple  
           ‘It’s for me.’  
       b. Je m’occupe d’abord de ma pomme.  
           I me.take.care.of first of my apple  
           ‘I’m looking after number one.’  
 (173) a. ... quand je joue pour ma pomme.  
           when I play for my apple  
           ‘... when I play for myself.’  
       b. Mozilla cherche à défendre sa pomme.  
           Mozilla seeks to defend his apple  
           ‘Mozilla seeks to defend himself.’

The possessive forms of the weak definite pronoun set {*ma, ta, tes, votre, vos, notre, nos, sa, leur*} combine with the mask *pomme(s)* to yield a camouflage structure that is, as far as we know, never obligatory, but widely possible. As with the ACC, the camouflage structure has the same meaning as the possessor DP alone.<sup>48</sup>

Like the ACC phenomenon in AAE, only the prenominal position of the possessor is possible (see 80).

- (174) a. sa maison/soeur  
           his house/sister

<sup>47</sup> Jean-Yves Pollock kindly informs us that he learned this slang usage as a child and that it was very much in use thirty years ago, at least in Paris. He suspects that it may have now become obsolescent, at least in Paris and large French cities. But he reports having the relevant intuitions on the usage. Moreover, the examples from the internet here are not from decades-old texts.

<sup>48</sup> As Jean-Yves Pollock reminds us, there is another French slang usage partially parallel to that based on the mask *pomme*, this one based on the mask *zigue(s)*, a slang stem otherwise meaning ‘guy’: *meszigues*, *voszigues*, and so on. We have not been able to study this construction, which may also be largely obsolescent.

- b. la maison/soeur de ce type barbant  
the house/sister of this type boring  
'the house/sister of that boring guy'
- c. sa pomme (= personne)  
his apple
- d. \*la pomme (= personne) de ce type barbant  
the apple of this type boring  
'that boring guy'

While the ACC shares with the French *pomme* camouflage structure the property of NOT being obligatory in a particular context, the Georgian camouflage case is not isolated either. There are arguably cases of obligatory camouflage in Mayan. Berinstein (1990) describes a clearly obligatory instance of camouflage found in K'ekchi. K'ekchi utilizes camouflage structures for several purposes, but the one of most relevance is that in all cases camouflage of an indirect object is obligatory, so that no uncamouflaged indirect object DPs occur in the language (Berinstein 1990:7).

- (175) 'All surface 3s have this Genitive structure. That is, they are presented as possessors of nouns. In this sense, the 3 is "camouflaged".'

Here Berinstein adopts the relational grammar notation '3' for indirect object. An example is given in 176.<sup>49</sup>

- (176) Lain x-Ø-in-yeh      r-e      laj      Lu'.  
I      TNS-B3-A1-tell A3-DAT NCL Pedro  
'I told it to Pedro.'

(Berinstein 1990:7)

In 176, B3, A1, and A3 are person agreement markers. Verbs agree with both their subjects and direct objects. Crucially, the A-type affixes also occur in possession expressions, prefixing to the head noun to cross-reference the possessor *Pedro*. The mask noun in 176 is *-e*, whose meaning in noncamouflage cases is 'mouth'.

Further, in Tzotzil, as described in Aissen 1987, the agent phrase in a passive clause has two alternate morphological realizations. Aissen describes the situation with respect to the following passive sentence.

- (177) L- i- chanubtas- at      y-u7un j- tot.  
cp B1 teach      psv A3-by A1 father  
'I was taught by my father.'

About this example, Aissen remarks: 'Superficially however, **jtot** is not a clausal dependent but a nominal dependent heading a Gen arc in the nominal **yu7un jtot**. In general, passive chomeurs are not clausal dependents in surface structure, but function either as possessors of the noun stem **-u7un** or as objects of the preposition **ta'** (1987:68).

In present terms, this is a way of saying that the agent DP in a passive, that corresponding to the logical subject, has to be camouflaged, usually as possessor of the mask *-u7un*. It is very roughly as if English passives counterfactually had the alternative in 178c.

- (178) a. \*I was taught my father.  
b. I was taught by my father.  
c. I was taught my father's u7un.

<sup>49</sup> The following abbreviations are used in examples 176 and 177: TNS: tense; A1: category A1 person agreement; A3: category A3 person agreement; B1: category B1 person agreement; B3: category B3 person agreement; NCL: noun classifier; cp: completive aspect.

Thus one might say that a Tzotzil agent DP that is NOT embedded in a PP obligatorily must be camouflaged with a mask *-u7un*.

Additionally, Aissen (1987:78–81) indicates that there is an obligatory type of camouflage associated with Tzotzil reflexives. A pronominal direct object anteceded by the subject of its clause appears as a possessor of a noun *ba*, which has nonreflexive uses where it means ‘top, face’. An illustrative example is seen in 179.

(179) Poxta [-o] a- ba.

care IMP A2 self

‘Take care of yourself.’

(Aissen 1987:38)

Here A2 denotes an agreement affix marking (inter alia) the general agreement in the language of a possessed noun with its genitive possessor. The existence of camouflage for possessors in Tzotzil supports our speculation in §10 that reflexives in AAE and standard English involve a kind of camouflage, one distinct from the ACC.

The idea that AAE *self* is a kind of mask and these remarks about Tzotzil reflexive camouflage raise the issue of the generality of camouflage in reflexive structures cross-linguistically. As Schladt (2000) discusses, reflexives are commonly formed from the words for ‘body’, ‘self’, ‘person’, and body-part terms. The body-part term most frequently used is ‘head’, but others include ‘bone’, ‘skin’, and ‘face’ (see the Tzotzil example in 179). In fact, in Schladt’s sample of 150 languages, 77 percent have reflexive expressions of this type.

Consider, for example, these sentences from Yoruba (see Awoyale 1985).

(180) ara wọn

body they/their

‘their bodies’, ‘themselves’, ‘each other’

(181) a. \*a rí a

we<sub>1</sub> saw we<sub>1</sub>

b. a rí ara wa

we<sub>1</sub> saw body us/our

‘we saw ourselves/each other/one another’

As Awoyale carefully notes, *ara* is the Yoruba word for body. The notion camouflage explored in this article allows one to understand the use of body-part terms in constructing reflexives. We propose that in these cases the body-part term is a (semantically vacuous) mask of a camouflage construction, just as *ass*, *tail*, *behind*, *butt*, and *self* are the masks of AAE camouflage constructions. Furthermore, a DP such as *ara wa* (when used as a reflexive or reciprocal) is given a standard camouflage derivation where the possessor *wa* moves into the possessor position from a position external to the shell DP *ara wa*.

Over all then, the attested camouflage structures from a range of diverse language families indicate that this is indeed a recurrent feature of natural language syntax.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Consider English data like the examples in (i).

(i) a. the decision by/on the part of the government to sign the treaty.

b. the claim by/on the part of that defendant that he had been mistreated.

It is conceivable that the variants here involving *on the part of* are instances of a camouflage structure with mask *part*. A parallelism with the Tzotzil camouflage structure that alternates with a PP containing the passive agent phrase is then notable. If this is a camouflage construction, it is the only one known that permits the possessor not to appear in a genitive position. We cannot consider the analysis of this construction here.

**13. CONCLUSION.** This article has given a systematic overview of an AAE DP construction we have called the ACC. This consists minimally of a possessor DP and a noun we called the mask. As documented in detail, the possessor DP has a dual behavior. In some respects (verb agreement, constituency), it behaves like a normal possessor internal to a larger DP. In others (reflexive binding, control, semantic selection), it behaves like it is external to the larger DP. We gave an informal account of this in terms of movement, while observing that the central idea was captured in the non-movement-based approach of Johnson & Postal 1980.

In addition to the rich descriptive material we have adduced on the ACC, there are at least three broader theoretical implications. First, our results are inconsistent with a widely adopted hypothesis about universal grammar that limits movement to c-commanding positions. Since this principle is central to the principles-and-parameters syntactic framework and subsequent minimalist work, elements of those frameworks that make critical appeal to this principle arguably need rethinking.

Second, we have shown how the ACC is one instance of a crosslinguistically reasonably well-attested syntactic type that we called camouflage, one first theoretically recognized in the relational literature of a quarter-century ago. The present study is, though, to the best of our knowledge, the first to really consider in great detail the factual properties of a camouflage construction. It is important for syntactic understanding that many further instances of the overall phenomenon be recognized and documented in detail in as great a variety of languages as possible so that its invariant properties and limits of variation can be solidly established.

Third, there are potentially more general theoretical implications from our conclusion about the existence of camouflage constructions and their specific properties. As we noted at the outset, most grammatical theorizing has never had anything to say about camouflage cases. The construction of various frameworks may well have involved different choices if the databases driving such frameworks had included camouflage phenomena. We would consider it a valuable result if our study stimulated workers in grammatical frameworks that have not previously dealt with camouflage to offer accounts of it in their favored terms. In particular, it would be important to make clear how particular approaches would deal with our crucial conclusion (or at least the underlying factual bases for it) that the possessor DP in a camouflage structure has an origin external to the shell DP, in contrast to noncamouflage possessor DPs.

#### REFERENCES

- AISSIN, JUDITH. 1987. *Tzotzil clause structure*. Dordrecht: Reidel.
- AWOYALE, YIWOLA. 1985. Reflexivization in Kwa languages. *Current approaches to African linguistics*, ed. by Gerrit J. Dimmendaal, 1–14. Dordrecht: Foris.
- BAUGH, JOHN. 1980. A re-examination of the Black English copula. *Locating language in time and space*, ed. by William Labov, 83–106. New York: Academic Press.
- BEAVERS, JOHN, and ANDREW KOONTZ-GARBODEN. 2006a. A universal pronoun in English. *Linguistic Inquiry* 37.503–13.
- BEAVERS, JOHN, and ANDREW KOONTZ-GARBODEN. 2006b. Expressive capability trumps syntax: A case study in colloquial English pronominals. Talk given at Georgetown University, Washington, DC, November 10, 2006.
- BERINSTEIN, AVA. 1990. On distinguishing surface datives in K'ekchi. *Studies in relational grammar 3*, ed. by Paul M. Postal and Brian D. Joseph, 3–48. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- BOBALJIK, JONATHAN DAVID, and SAMUEL BROWN. 1997. Interarboreal operations: Head movement and the extension requirement. *Linguistic Inquiry* 28.345–56.
- COLLINS, CHRIS. 2005. A smuggling approach to the passive in English. *Syntax* 8.81–120.

- COLLINS, CHRIS. 2007. An AAE camouflage construction. Paper presented to the Department of Linguistics, University of Maryland, College Park, MD.
- FASOLD, RALPH. 1972. *Tense marking in Black English: A linguistic and social analysis*. Arlington, VA: Center for Applied Linguistics.
- GREEN, LISA J. 2002. *African American English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- HARRIS, ALICE. 1981. *Georgian syntax*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- HEIM, IRENE. 2005. Features on bound pronouns: Syntax or semantics? Cambridge, MA: MIT, MS. Online: <http://www.zas.gwz-berlin.de/mitarb/homepage/sauerland/heim.pdf>
- HEIM, IRENE, and ANGELIKA KRATZER. 1998. *Semantics in generative grammar*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- HELKE, MICHAEL. 1970. *The grammar of English reflexives*. Cambridge, MA: MIT dissertation.
- JOHNSON, DAVID E., and PAUL M. POSTAL. 1980. *Arc pair grammar*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- JOSEPH, BRIAN. 1979. On the agreement of reflexive forms in English. *Linguistics* 17.519–23.
- KATHOL, ANDREAS. 1999. Agreement and the syntax-morphology interface in HPSG. *Studies in contemporary phrase structure grammar*, ed. by Robert Levine and Georgia M. Green, 223–74. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- KAYNE, RICHARD. 1994. *The antisymmetry of syntax*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- LABOV, WILLIAM. 1969. Contraction, deletion, and inherent variability of the English copula. *Language* 45.715–62.
- LABOV, WILLIAM. 1972. *Language in the inner city: Studies in the Black English Vernacular*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- LABOV, WILLIAM; PAUL COHEN; CLARENCE ROBINS; and JOHN LEWIS. 1968. A study of the non-standard English of Negro and Puerto Rican speakers in New York City. *Cooperative research report 3288*, vols. 1 and 2. Philadelphia: US Regional Survey (Linguistics Laboratory, University of Pennsylvania).
- LAGUNOFF, RACHEL. 1997. *Singular they*. Los Angeles: University of California dissertation.
- MCCAWLEY, JAMES D. 1998. *The syntactic phenomena of English*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- NUNES, JAIRO. 2001. Sideward movement. *Linguistic Inquiry* 32.303–44.
- POLLARD, CARL J., and IVAN SAG. 1992. Anaphors in English and the scope of binding theory. *Linguistic Inquiry* 23.262–303.
- POLLARD, CARL J., and IVAN SAG. 1994. *Head-driven phrase structure grammar*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- POSTAL, PAUL M. 1998. *Masked inversion in French*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- POSTAL, PAUL M., and JOHN R. ROSS. 2008. Inverse reflexives. *Papers in honor of Terence D. Langendoen*, ed. by William Lewis, Simin Karimi, Heidi Harley, and Scott Farrar. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, to appear.
- PULLUM, GEOFFREY K. 1976. The Duke of York gambit. *Journal of Linguistics* 12.83–102.
- REINHART, TANYA, and ERIC REULAND. 1993. Reflexivity. *Linguistic Inquiry* 24.657–720.
- REULAND, ERIC, and TANYA REINHART. 1991. Binding conditions and chains. *West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics* 10.399–415.
- RICKFORD, JOHN R. 1998. The Creole origins of African American Vernacular English: Evidence from copula absence. *African American English: Structure, history, and usage*, ed. by Salikoko S. Mufwene, John R. Rickford, Guy Bailey, and John Baugh, 154–200. London: Routledge.
- ROSS, JOHN ROBERT. 1967. *Constraints on variables in syntax*. Cambridge, MA: MIT dissertation.
- SCHLADT, MATHIAS. 2000. The typology and grammaticalization of reflexives. *Reflexives, forms and functions*, ed. by Zygmunt Frajzyngier and Traci S. Curl, 103–24. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- SPEARS, ARTHUR. 1982. The Black English semi-auxiliary *come*. *Language* 58.850–72.
- SPEARS, ARTHUR. 1998. African-American language use: Ideology and so-called obscenity. *African American English: Structure, history, and usage*, ed. by Salikoko S. Mufwene, John R. Rickford, Guy Bailey, and John Baugh, 226–50. New York: Routledge.
- WOLFRAM, WALT. 1969. *A sociolinguistic description of Detroit Negro speech*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.



ZRIBI-HERTZ, ANNE. 1989. Anaphor binding and narrative point of view: English reflexive pronouns in sentence and discourse. *Language* 65.695–727.

Department of Linguistics  
New York University  
726 Broadway, 7th Floor  
New York, NY 10003

[Received 24 January 2007;  
accepted 21 July 2007]

Collins  
[cc116@nyu.edu]

Moody  
[sdm243@nyu.edu]

Postal  
[paul.postal@nyu.edu]