hyper-Theme 3 (and following text):

Semiconductors are midway between conductors and insulators.

Under certain conditions they allow a current to flow easily but **under others** they behave as insulators. **Germanium and silicon** are semiconductors. **Mixtures of certain metallic oxides** also act as semiconductors. **These** are known as thermistors. **The resistance of thermistors** falls rapidly as **their temperature** rises. **They** are therefore used in temperature-sensing devices. (Glendinning 1980)

The distribution of information as Theme and minimal New in 25 is outlined in detail in Table 5 below. The minimal domain of New in each clause is specified, assuming that TONICITY is unmarked throughout the text - that it will be read in others words with the Tonic falling on the last salient syllable of each information unit (assuming unmarked TONALITY, with the information unit corresponding to a single clause). It is clear from Table 5 that text 25 systematically maps conductors, insulators and semiconductors onto New. This makes good sense in macro-Themes and hyper-Themes where these categories are being introduced and established as the text's anticipated method of development. Elsewhere however it results in a recurrent association of new information with clause initial position (where it has not been predicted) and old information with final position (where the reader expects news). The text in other words is a pathological one, completely inverting the unmarked distribution of given and new information in the English clause. In this respect it is not surprising that students find this reading and comprehension exercise a difficult one and the text poses a set of puzzling questions as to how the author of these materials managed so systematically to invert the natural textual periodicity of information giving texts of this kind.

THEME	(minimal) NEW
If we connect a battery across a body, [there] This movement of electrons All materials how readily These	towards the positive end an electric current into three groups to flow conductors, insulators and semiconductors
In the first category [which]	substances an easy path for an electric current
All metals some metals Manganin Copper It A non-metal which conducts well Salt water	conductors do not conduct well a poor conductor a good conductor for cables carbon an example of a liquid conductor
A material...	an insulator
Rubber, nylon, porcelain There All insulators however this	insulators no perfect insulators some flow of electrons, can usually be ignored

the flow they permit	so small
Semiconductors	midway between conductors and insulators
Under certain conditions	easily
under others	as insulators
Germanium and silicon	semiconductors
Mixtures of certain metallic oxides	as semiconductors
These	as thermistors
The resistance of thermistors	rapidly
their temperature	rises
They	in temperature-sensing devices

Table 5: Theme and minimal New in text 25

This is not the place to attempt to resolve the origin of pathological ESP materials. The important point here is that Halliday's complementary perspective on Theme and New and Theme's solidary relation to various layers of text structure provides one explanation of the difficulty students face when attempting to read this material. The challenge for Huddleston's position is that of generating a rival interpretation of the difficulty of text 25 deriving from his notion that English does not use clause sequence to grammaticalise Theme but rather relies on context to sort out textual considerations in the absence of clause initial Circumstances of matter (note that there are no clause initial Circumstances of matter in texts 9, 10, 12, 13, 23, 24, or 25 and so for Huddleston context has to do all the work in determining clause topics in texts of this kind). It may of course be that Huddleston does not expect his analysis to be responsible to discourse considerations in this respect, in which case he and Halliday are playing very different games, and there is no sense in which Huddleston's reductive co-option of Halliday's interpretation of Theme counts as an argument against Halliday's own position.

It should also be noted that having dismissed correlations between discourse patterns and clause organisation such as those proposed by Daneš, Fries and Halliday, it remains very unclear just how Huddleston proposed to explain (as opposed to describe) the organisation of the English clause, with respect to synchronic patterning across registers (see Halliday (1979b, 1985c/1989, 1987) on lexical density, grammatical intricacy, grammatical metaphor and texture in spoke and written language) and phylogenetic developments such as those documented by Halliday (1988) for scientific English.

5. The price of reply

In this paper, taking Huddleston (1988) as point of departure, an attempt has been made to push the discussion of Theme in English back to (1981)[21] when Fries laid the foundation for a discourse interpretation of Halliday's analysis of Theme ˆ Rheme structure in the English clause. The point of writing a paper to recover this lost ground has been to illustrate in a partial way the cost of replying to dismissal genres such as the review written by Huddleston - his attempt to demonstrate that Halliday's functional grammar of English is fundamentally flawed. The main work which had to be done in replying to just this one aspect of Huddleston's review lay in undoing the reappropriation gambit whereby Huddleston reductively co-opted Halliday's account of Theme. This co-option, as outlined in section 3.1, involved defining Theme in experiential terms with respect to clause initial Circumstances of matter (or simply leaving it to context to determine Theme where this method of explicitly announcing Theme is not taken up), restricting Theme to constituents which can function as potential complements in Circumstances of this kind, conflating Halliday's notions of Theme ˆ Rheme and (Given) ˆ New, and reducing

Halliday's concepts of marked and unmarked Theme to the opposition between clause initial Circumstances of matter and other contextual determined Themes realised anywhere in the clause. The descriptive parameters of this reappropriation are summarised below:

i   - metafunction [experiential only]
ii   - rank [potential complement of *as for*; i.e. nominal group]
iii   - Theme/Rheme & Given/New [Topic/Comment]
iv   - marked/unmarked Theme [initial Circumstance of matter/context]

Alongside challenging this strategy of reductive co-option the paper has presented evidence that Theme in Halliday's sense can be given a powerful discourse interpretation, especially when taken in conjunction with Halliday's complementary notion of New. Drawing on Fries' work several texts were reviewed which show some of the ways in which initial position in the clause is exploited to construct patterns which constitute what Fries refers to as a text's method of development. Evidence was also presented that in these texts' method of development tends to be anticipated by higher level Themes (hyper-Themes and macro-Themes) and that method of development correlates with other aspects of discourse organisation, for example conjunctive structure. It was also questioned at various points whether Huddleston's notion of topic cannot sustain rich discourse interpretations of this kind.

So serious a misrepresentation of Halliday's position, alongside Huddleston's failure to address Halliday's own exemplifications of thematic development in the *Introduction to Functional Grammar* or any of the relevant systemic functional literature noted in Halliday's Bibliography raises serious concerns about the power of the dismissal genre to place scholars like Huddleston in reading positions which border on the egocentric and myopic. By way of justifying his position Huddleston offers the simple comment that Halliday's position is unclear. The relevant quotation is repeated below by way of underlining the fact that the sentence beginning *It is not clear...* is not unpacked in Huddleston's review; it does not function as a consolidating hyper-New or macro-New.

> It is not clear that 'point of departure' or 'starting point' can sustain an interpretation that is independent of syntactic sequence - that the theme is the point of departure for the message in a more significant sense than that of being the first element. This leaves us with the meaning of Theme as what the clause is concerned with or about... (Huddleston 1988:158)

Anyone reading Huddleston's review is perfectly justified in asking a few simple questions; for example:

- Did you check Appendix I (Halliday 1985a:346-371, foreshadowed pp. xvi, 67) or the sample analysis in Chapter 3 (Halliday 1985a:64-67)?

- What about the reference to Fries' work? Have you followed up? (Halliday 1985a:385)?

- You might have a look at Daneš. Doesn't the notion of thematic progression come from there? (cf. Halliday's explicit acknowledgement of his debt to Prague School 1985a:xxii, 38)

But these questions were apparently not asked - not by Huddleston, not by anyone commenting on a draft of his review, not by the editor and paper adjudicating readers of the journal in which it was published. Why not? This is an important question. One very plausible explanation is that naturalised statements of this kind do not need to be justified. They simply speak the status quo. Linguists writing from a non-hegemonic position on the other hand are not likely to have their

work treated in this way. In what sense for example would the following sentence count as a refutation of Huddleston's position? Who would publish it in this unsubstantiated form?

> It is not clear that what the clause is concerned with or about can sustain an interpretation of syntactic sequence, of the way in which constituents are ordered in the English clause - this leaves us with the notion of Theme as point of departure for the message, grammaticalised in English in clause initial position...

One might plausibly go on to conclude that the dismissal genre can only be written and published from a hegemonic position; the reappropriation gambit depends on naturalised meanings. Anyone doubting the hegemonic positioning of Huddleston's review need look no further than the recurrent references to the 'familiar', the 'well-known', the 'traditional', the 'intuitive', the 'bizarre' and the 'counter-intuitive' throughout the review; for example:

> This has, for me at least, stretched the concept of identification to the point where it is no longer intuitively graspable... (Huddleston 1988:170)

What is to be done, in the face of reviews of this kind, by way of reply? One option would be to simply ignore these reviews, refusing to engage in debate with this order of reappropriation and misrepresentation. The cost of refusing to engage is that scholars whose work is dismissed in this way will be seen either as incapable of or disinterested in a reply. At several points in his review Huddleston baits Halliday along just these lines, since Halliday's own response to dismissals over the years has generally been to ignore them completely and get on with his own work (with the exception of Halliday 1966)[22]; here are two examples of Huddleston's lures:

> ...as pointed out in the unanswered criticisms of Bazell 1973:201. (Huddleston 1988:140)

> These are elementary and familiar types of example and it is symptomatic of the lack of dialogue referred to above that Halliday does not attempt to forestall objections like this. (Huddleston 1988:158)

The price of replying to reductive co-option is also very high. It takes a lot of time - somewhere in the order of several hundred hours work to undo the successive misrepresentations in a review like Huddleston's; and as this paper illustrates, replying to just one of these takes up a lot of space as well. This means in effect that a full reply has little chance of being published. Christian Matthiessen and I worked very hard to reduce a full reply to Huddleston's review (Matthiessen and Martin 1991) to something just over twice the length of his article only to have the editor of the *Journal of Linguistics* refuse even to send it on to readers on the grounds that it would take up too much space in a single issue of the journal to be published (Huddleston was allowed 38 pages for his review). To this cost needs to be added the price of arguing a case on someone else's terms, the risk of lapsing oneself into the dismissal genre[23], and the embarrassment of being publicly construed as an apologist (a rabid polemicist, a paranoid disciple, a blind proselytist and so on; in Australia the reconstruction of institutional politics as religion along these lines is widespread - an ideological commitment to linguistics as social action cannot generally be read other than as a matter of 'faith').

Written and published from a hegemonic position then the dismissal genre is cheap and powerful. Reappropriation into the familiar, the traditional, the well-known and the intuitively graspable is a natural manoeuvre and places writers in a strong position to critique another's work. This gambit can be easily repeated over and over again, taking up just a page or two on each cycle until several years' or even a lifetime's work is demolished (sic). Read from a non-hegemonic position on the other hand the dismissal genre is costly and difficult to subvert. Countless abuses of power are naturalised by and predicated on the rationalisations constituted by dismissal genres. It takes time and space to reply - time one can scarcely afford when working from an institutional position undermined by the dismissal genre; space that is unlikely to be

granted given the constraints placed by journals on the length of articles. It's a frustrating business all round. In this paper I have opted for a reply which attempts to demonstrate publicly that the dismissal genre constructs its authors at their worst[24], focussing in particular on the reappropriation gambit by way of demonstrating that any rationalisation of the genre as 'scholarly critique' is far from justified given the way in which reappropriation is pursued and must be pursued if an entire discourse is to be dismissed.

What kind of an institution is it that naturalises the dismissal genre as a prestigious form of scholarly critique? Is it an institution that makes the kind of linguistics its members pursue criterial and on this basis rejects conference papers, sacks untenured staff, victimises students competing for scholarships, marginalises courses, bullies students into mainstream discourses, dismisses prospective research students, blocks promotions, sabotages research applications, discredits applied work, titters at annual meetings when forthcoming international congresses are announced...? Is it? Is it an institution that uses this dismissal genre to rationalise hurting those members least able to defend themselves, precisely those people who are institutionally most vulnerable to attack - undergraduate students, graduate students, untenured and part-time staff, women, migrants, gays...? Is it? Is this dismissal genre any more than linguists' implementation of the vicious patriarchal competitiveness that has overgrown boys with their toys running around the world slaughtering each other and anyone else who gets in their way?

These scenarios are unpleasant ones, and to unnaturalised readers they are not the 'sour grapes' of fantasy. I suspect there are few linguists who would deny that any of this goes on; and there are many who have observed or experienced a great deal of it very close to home. These scenarios can be avoided, if we want to avoid them. But this can only be accomplished by changing our social practices (our genres), beginning with this dismissal genre - which I would argue frustrates dialogue and naturalises intolerance. In these respects it is an abuse of power. Has(n't) its time passed?

Footnotes

[1] This paper was written in response to a decision by the Editor of the *Journal of Linguistics* not to send Matthiessen and Martin (1991) to reviewers for reasons of length. It was first delivered orally to the 1990 meeting of the Australian Linguistic Society at Macquarie University where it received a very favorable response. Subsequently it was submitted to the *Journal of Linguistics*, where it received mixed reviews and was ultimately rejected as an unscholarly and unwarranted personal attack on Huddleston by the Editor. This paper does not address Huddleston's (1991) reply to Matthiessen and Martin, which nonetheless functions as a prototypical instantiation of the dismissal genre.

[2] The *ang* phrase in fact marks topical Theme; for discussion of interpersonal and topical Theme in Tagalog see Martin (1990).

[3] Conflation of Theme with Predicator is rare; here is an attested example - *We threw on the required extra garments and raced, comrades in a seemingly hopeless endeavour, towards the stage, feeling that, even though the odds were that we couldn't make it, we would, because we had to. And make it we did, with enough time to receive a very brief and concise dressing down from the stage manager before partaking, in cloaks, masks and hats, in the abduction of Rigoletto.* [P. Brent 'Extra Special life with spear carriers' Monday Bloody Monday, Sydney Morning Herald, Monday, January 20, 1992: 24]. For conflation of Theme with Complement see example 9.m below.

[4] Halliday's recognition of multiple Themes should however be read as a metafunctionally constrained attempt to build the notion of wave into the particulate representation.

5 Lest it be objected here that Huddleston may have been genuinely unaware of Fries' work it needs to be pointed out here that as editor of the *Australian Journal of Linguistics* Huddleston carefully edited Martin (1983a), a paper which draws heavily on Fries and in addition, at Martin's suggestion, passed a copy of Fries' paper to one journal contributor whose work was being reviewed by Martin. Fries' paper is item 13 in Halliday's Bibliography.

6 Treated as a marked Theme realising Theme predication (Halliday 1985a:60)

7 For further exemplification of solidarity between conjunction and method of development see Mann, Matthiessen and Thompson's analysis of the ZPG text using Rhetorical Structure Theory in Mann and Thompson (in press).

8 For further evidence of the significance of initial position see Thompson (1985).

9 In addition Huddleston makes not reference to the exemplification in Halliday (1985b); for further exemplification see Halliday (forthcoming a, b).

10 The paper was originally delivered orally, as a 20 minute presentation to the Canadian Wildlife Federation.

11 In this regard Huddleston writes: "Thus *She broke it* , say, will be interpreted as being primarily about 'her' when used in answer to *What did she do?* but about 'it' in answer to *What happened to it?* " (1988:159). Huddleston's notion of context in his review is restricted to that of question-answer pairs.

12 Significantly, as Christian Matthiessen has pointed out to me, *as for* Themes are associated with a developmental pattern which differs from that of other Themes; *as for* Themes always hark back to previously mentioned material, whereas other Themes need not.

13 Huddleston fails to acknowledge this ambiguity when discussing the example *behind the filing cabinet were the two manuscripts* in his review (1988:170); note that the example can be tagged with either *weren't they?* (the attributive reading) or *weren't there?* (the existential reading).

14 Cf. meteorological processes which have Subjects with no experiential meaning: *It's raining, It's snowing, It's blowing a bloody gale.*

15 "*There was an affair - a classic.*
// 1 *A classic was here* //
There was an affair going on between the cook and this other girl, you know. "
- an attested example of Theme conflated with Existent from Slade (1990).

16 On the existential reading the unmarked Tonic falls on the Existent: //1 *A guard was on the gate*//; on the alternative attributive reading the unmarked Tonic falls on the Circumstance: //1 *A guard was on the gate* // (placing the Tonic on the Carrier would be contrastive in the attributive). The existential is tagged *wasn't there?*, the attributive *wasn't he?* When not Theme, *there* is optional, there being no need to make such a weak modally responsible Subject explicit.

17 This example can be read as a reversed attributive, in which case the tag would be *wasn't he?*

18 If taken as a 'congruent' Circumstance of Accompaniment, *In addition to this* could be treated as a marked topical Theme; it is however taken as a connective here, following Halliday and Hasan's (1976:242-243) general treatment of textually oriented prepositional phrases of this

kind (e.g. *despite this, because of this, on account of this, arising out of this, with reference to this, aside from this* etc.).

19 *Under normal circumstances* has been taken as marked Theme for the whole of the clause complex it introduces in this analysis.

20 Note that this paragraph makes use of unmarked Themes to arrest the method of development constructed through marked Themes in paragraph 1; the metatextual Theme, *the global picture* , of the first sentence functions as a clear signal that the text is shifting at this point to an more interpretative level of abstraction.

21 It is important to note in this connection that Halliday and Fries are themselves building on foundational work by Prague School linguists, which has also been completely effaced by Huddleston. Daneš' (1974b) collection of papers from the 1970 international symposium on Functional Sentence Perspective (attended by Daneš, Halliday, Firbas and Sgall among others) provides a number of useful models of negotiating discourse, as does Dirven & Fried (1987).

22 Huddleston it should be noted glosses over Halliday's futile attempts to open dialogue with formal linguists (e.g. Halliday 1964) and makes no acknowledgement of Halliday's fertile dialogue with functionally oriented schools such as the Prague School, stratificational linguistics or tagmemics, nor of Halliday's influential interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary negotiations in the fields of educational linguistics, social semiotics, computational linguistics, stylistics and so on.

23 Newmeyer (1980) aptly refers refers to the volleys of dismissal genre exchanged by Chomskyan linguists (interpretive vs generative semantics) during the 1970s as 'The Linguistic Wars.' Not surprisingly, the 'argument as war' metaphor is the first example presented by Lakoff and Johnson (1980:4) in their discussion of the metaphors by which we live.

24 In Huddleston's case the results are glaring, given the otherwise consistently high quality of his scholarship, for which, let me stress, I have tremendous respect.

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