

Activity 17.6 - George Fox's *Journal*

Spoken narrative taken down from dictation

The structure of a text can sometimes be made clearer by setting it out clause by clause, separating off the coordinating conjunctions and other linking words. When telling a story orally we use lots of coordinators and linkers like *and*, *and then*, *and so*, *but* and *for* to join up the steps of the narrative. This is normal practice for all of us. But it has long been regarded as poor style in writing, so much so that some people say that it is ungrammatical to begin a sentence with *and*, in spite of its very frequent appearance in the narrative books of the Bible. For example in the Old Testament second book of Samuel, Chapter 15, verses 1-12, in the 1611 translation, we find that the clauses punctuated with full stops, semi-colons or colons begin as follows:

And	it came to pass ...
And	Absalom rose up early...
and	it was so, that ? ...
And	he said ...
And	Absalom said ...
	Absalom said moreover ...
And	it was so, that ...
And	on this manner ...
so	Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.
And	it came to pass ...
For	thy servant vowed a vow ...
And	the king said ...
So	he arose, and went to Hebron ...
But	Absalom sent spies ...
And	with Absalom went ...
and	they went in their simplicity, and they knew not anything.
And	Absalom sent for Ahithophel ...

Now the *King James Bible* of 1611 has long been admired for its language, which questions the "rule" about not beginning a sentence with *and*. The Old Testament is translated from the Hebrew, and the books of Jewish history are the written records of an older oral tradition, so the reason for use of so many linking words is clear. They function like punctuation marks in writing, to mark off units of grammar, and sections of narrative. So it is not surprising that George Fox's narrative reads similarly. Not only is he using forms of linking which all story-tellers use, but he was steeped in the language of the *King James Bible*.

If we set out Fox's narrative to show the frequency of linking words and conjunctions, we have clear evidence of the *Journal's* origins in the spoken language. The sign Ø indicates a deletion, typically where a repeated clause subject is omitted in two coordinated clauses - a normal and extremely common feature of our use of English, eg:

the rude people layde waite, & they	stoned us doune the lane
the rude people layde waite, & Ø	stoned us doune the lane

First sentence

then we went away to Balby about a mile off:
 & the rude people layde waite }
 & Ø stoned us doune the lane }
 but blessed be ye Lorde wee did not receive much hurte:
 & then ye next first day I went to Tickill
 & there ye freinds of yt side gathered together
 & there was a meetinge.

Second sentence

And I went out of ye meetinge to ye steeplehouse
 & ye preist & most of ye heads of ye parish was gott uppe Into ye chancell
 & soe I went uppe to ym
 & when I began to speake }
 they fell upon mee }
 & ye Clarke uppe with his bible }
 as I was speakinge }
 & Ø hitt mee in ye face }
 yt my face gusht out with bloode }
 yt I bleade exceedingly in ye steeplehouse }
 & soe ye people cryed }
 letts have him out of ye Church }
 as they caled it }
 & when they had mee out }
 they exceedingly beate mee }
 & Ø threw me doune }
 & Ø threw mee over a hedge }
 & after Ø dragged mee through a house Into ye street }
 stoneinge & beatinge mee }
 & they gott my hatt from mee which I never gott againe.

Third sentence

Soe when I was gott upon my leggs }
 I declared to ym ye worde of life }
 & Ø showed to ym ye fruites of there teachers }
 & howe they dishonored Christianity }

Fourth sentence

And soe after a while I gott Into ye meetinge againe amongst freinds
 & ye preist & people comeinge by ye house }
 I went foorth with freinds Into ye Yarde }
 & there I spoake to ye preist & people:
 & the preist scoffed at us }
 & Ø caled us Quakers }
 but ye Lords power was soe over ym all:
 & ye worde of life was declared in soe much power & dreade to ym }
 yt ye preist fell a tremblinge himselfe }
 yt one saide unto him }
 looke howe ye preist trembles }
 & Ø shakes }
 hee is turned a Quaker alsoe.

Grammatical structure

If we accept the frequency of initial *and* as a feature of oral narrative, and not as a grammatical coordinating conjunction which creates over-long sentences, we find that the text has a very simple structure, both at clause and phrase level. It mostly follows the common unmarked pattern of clause structure - SPCA, with very little subordination. There is no complexity at phrase level. This can most easily be shown by setting out a linear version of the text in columns:

	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Predicator (Verb)</i>	<i>Complement/Object</i>	<i>Adverbial</i>
	then	we	went away	to Balby
				about a mile off:
	&	the rude people	layde waite	
	&		stoned	us
	but	ye Lorde	be	blessed
		wee	did not receive	much hurte:
	& then ye next first day (A)	I	went	to Tickill
	& there	ye freinds of y ^t side	gathered	together
	&	there	was	a meetinge.
	And	I	went out of	ye meetinge
	&	ye preist & most of ye heads of ye parish	was gott uppe	Into ye chancell
	& soe	I	went uppe	to y ^m
	& when	I	began to speake	
		they	fell upon	mee
	&	ye Clarke	uppe with	his bible
	as	I	was speakeinge	
	&	Ø	hitt	mee
	y ^t	my face	gusht out	in ye face
	y ^t	I	bleade	with bloode
	y ^t	I	bleade	exceedingly in ye steeplehouse
	& soe	ye people	cryed	
			letts have	him
			letts have	out of ye Church
	as	they	caled	it:
	& when	they	had	mee
				out

	they (exceedingly A)	beate	mee	
&	∅	threw	me	doune
&	∅	threw	mee	over a hedge:
& after	∅	dragged	mee	through a house Into ye street
		stoneinge		
&		beatinge	mee:	
&	they	gott	my hatt	from mee
which	I (never A)	gott		again.
Soe when	I	was gott		upon my leggs
	I	declared	ye worde of life	to y ^m
&	∅	showed	ye fruites of there teachers	to y ^m
& howe	they	dishonored	Christianity	
And soe after a while (A)	I	gott		Into ye meetinge againe amongst freinds
&	ye preist & people	comeinge		by ye house
	I	went foorth		with freinds Into ye Yarde
& there	I	spoake		to ye preist & people:
&	the preist	scoffed		at us
&	∅	caled	us Quakers:	
but	ye Lords power	was	soe	over y ^m all:
&	ye worde of life	was declared		in soe much power & dreade to y ^m
y ^t	ye preist ... himselfe	fell a tremblinge		
y ^t	one	saide		unto him
		looke		
howe	ye preist	trembles & shakes		
	hee	is turned	a Quaker	alsoe.

The **subordinate clauses** are short and do not add any significant complexity to the text:

when	I began to speake	<i>AdvCl (time)</i>
as	I was speakinge	<i>AdvCl (time)</i>
yt	my face gusht out with bloode	<i>AdvCl (result)</i>
yt	I bleade exceedingly in ye steeplehouse	<i>AdvCl (result)</i>
as	they caled it	<i>AdvCl (manner)</i>
when	they had mee out	<i>AdvCl (time)</i>
	stoneinge & beatinge mee	<i>NonfCl</i>
which	I never gott againe	<i>RelCl</i>
when	I was gott upon my leggs	<i>AdvCl (time)</i>
	ye preist & people comeinge by ye house	<i>NonfCl</i>
yt	ye preist fell a tremblinge himselfe	<i>AdvCl (result)</i>
yt	one saide unto him	<i>AdvCl (result)</i>

Vocabulary

In general terms we would classify the words as core vocabulary, coming from the common stock of words used in everyday, informal talk. This can be checked by looking up the sources of the lexical words (nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs), and we would expect to find that they either came directly from Old English or Old Norse, or else from those Old French words which were assimilated into common English speech early, and not introduced by writers or scholars.

Old French

bible
chancell
Christianity
cryed
dishonored
exceedingly
face
fruites
hurte
people
power
receive
rude
trembles/ tremblinge
waite

ME fr Latin

declared

Old English

again
all
alsoe
away
be
beate/beatinge
began
bleade
blessed
bloode
caled
Church
Clarke
comeinge
day
did
doune
dragged
dreade
first
foorth
freinds
gathered
gott
gusht
hatt
have
heads
hedge
hitt
house

lane
layde
letts
life
looke
Lorde
meetinge
mile
much
next
not
off
preist
Quaker
saide
shakes
side
speake/ speakinge/spoake
steeplehouse
stoned/stoneinge
street
teachers
then
there
threw
together
turned
uppe
went
while
worde
Yarde

Old Norse

leggs
scoffed