JAMES D. McCAWLEY

On Saturday, April 10, 1999, sometime between nine and ten P.M., while walking home from a concert in Hyde Park, James D. McCawley suffered a heart attack. He collapsed and was immediately taken to the nearby University of Chicago hospital, where, after strenuous efforts at resuscitation had failed, he was pronounced dead, at the age of sixty-one. Jim, as he was universally known to his students, colleagues, and admirers—comprising together a large percentage of the world's linguists—was one of the great figures of twentieth-century linguistics, a recipient of practically every honor possible, a past president of the LSA, and a genuine original. He was greatly loved, and he is greatly missed.[1]

James Quillan McCawley Jr. was born into a Catholic family in Glasgow, Scotland, on March 31, 1938, the first child of Dr. Monica Bateman McCawley (b. 1901), a physician and surgeon, and James Quillan McCawley (b. 1899), a businessman. The family had planned to emigrate to America, and in 1939 James Sr. and two brothers went to Toronto and founded the McCawley Bros. Roofing Company, but with the arrival of the war Dr. McCawley felt her patients needed her in Scotland. She stayed there, with the children, for the duration, while James Sr. moved on to New York City, and finally to Chicago, where the family settled in Elmhurst after the war. Young Jim was eventually joined by a brother, John Frederick ('Ricky'), and two sisters, Monica and Caroline.

Jim spent much of his time in satisfying his boundless curiosity about everything; he was constantly in action, though often the action consisted of reading—he always had his nose in a book. He was close to his brother, and Ricky's sudden death from leukemia in 1952 came as a shock. Sometime during this period he started studying languages; by the time he was twenty, he was able to support himself by translating Russian mathematical texts, and he spoke several other languages fluently. Eventually he learned to speak (at least) Dutch, German, Yiddish, Swedish, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Hindi, Hungarian, Mandarin, and Japanese.

He also displayed an early interest in music, notably performing 'Bumblebee Boogie' on the accordion on Ted Mack's Original Amateur Hour at the age of nine, only two years after arriving in America. As a teenager, he worked part time as an Andy Frain[2] usher at concerts all over Chicago, gaining, besides a little money and a great deal of musical experience, an encyclopedic familiarity with the Chicago Transit Authority, which was to serve him well in later life, because one component of a normal American youth never fell into place for Jim—unlike practically every other teenage boy growing up in Illinois at the time, he never learned to drive, and indeed had a lifelong aversion

[1] I wish to express my gratitude to the many people who talked to me about Jim and/or read preliminary versions of this memorial, especially Caroline McCawley Podvin, Noriko Akatsuka, Háj Ross, Andy Rogers, Michael Szamosi, Bill Darden, Peter Daniels, Dick Hudson, Izaak Wirszup, Jerry Sadock, Pete Becker, Kate Birr, and the editor.

[2] Andy Frain Services (founded 1924, www.andyfrain.com) is a large and well-known Chicagoland firm that provides ushers for area concerts in large venues, for which it hires many part-time workers.

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to machines of all sorts. But he did eventually learn to play many musical instruments, including the clarinet, guitar, harpsichord, and piano.

Jim had not been especially happy about moving to America as a young boy, but he did manage to take advantage later of one aspect of the move. As a minor, he automatically became an American citizen when his parents were naturalized, and he seized this opportunity to change his name officially to James David McCawley, losing the 'Jr.'. Under any name, however, he was recognized early as very bright; he skipped several grades while attending parochial grade schools and St. Mel's High School. Entering the University of Chicago (UC) in 1954 at the age of sixteen, under its early admission program, he progressed rapidly, gaining early admission also to the graduate school, from which he received an M.S. in mathematics in 1958.[3]

At this point he left the UC academic community for the first time, accepting a Fulbright fellowship to study mathematics and logic in 1959–60 at Westfälische Wilhelms University in Münster. It seems to have been expected that he would return to Chicago to study for a doctorate in mathematics, since there was reportedly considerable interest among the faculty there about whom he would eventually choose to study with. However, as he tells the story in a *Glot* interview (Cheng & Sybesma 1998:26):

> Originally, I was in mathematics, but for no particularly good reason—I really hadn't thought much about what I was getting myself into. I was taking some language courses and enjoyed them and at the same time I got more and more turned off by mathematics. Eventually I thumbed through the University of Chicago time schedule and saw that there was something listed as 'linguistics'. So I sat in on a linguistics course taught by Eric Hamp, which I greatly enjoyed. Then I got a mathematics scholarship to study in Germany, at the University of Münster. But instead of doing very much mathematics, I took all sorts of language courses, including a Dutch course. During that year, I got more and more turned off by mathematics. After I got back to Chicago, I wanted to take a language course just for the fun of it. Japanese was offered at a convenient time, so I took it and I fell in love with the language right away.
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> I also started looking around in the library for linguistic books. I came upon *Syntactic Structures* and it really turned me on. Not long after that I saw the announcement for the new linguistics graduate program that they were starting at MIT. I applied, got accepted, went there, became a linguist, and I have been enjoying life much more ever since then.

He spent the next three years as a graduate student at MIT, a member of the first Ph.D. class there; he worked as a research assistant with the Mechanical Translation group at MIT in 1962 and 1963, and was also a teaching assistant in German. He left Cambridge only briefly, in the summers of 1961 (for the LSA Summer Institute at the University of Texas), 1963 (to study intensive Japanese at Seton Hall), and 1964 (to do research at the IBM Watson Center in Yorktown Heights).

In the summer of 1965—the year he received his doctorate for a dissertation under Noam Chomsky, 'The accentual system of modern standard Japanese'—he participated in a workshop at MIT on mathematical models in linguistics. This was his last formal affiliation with MIT. He had already returned to the University of Chicago, as assistant professor of linguistics. While he traveled widely and frequently, and was a visiting professor at fifteen universities in seven countries on four continents, he was to spend the rest of his life on the Chicago faculty, with promotion to tenure rank in 1969 and professor a year later. During his last decades at UC he was the Andrew MacLeish

[3] A story often told about him is that he took and failed the B.S. exam the same week as the M.S. exam, which he passed. Hence, no bachelor's degree. I have been unable to find any confirming evidence for this story, and, prima facie, a story that depends on Jim McCawley failing an examination seems very unlikely. It is the sort of story that would have amused Jim, though, so he may well have failed to deny it convincingly enough to suppress it.

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Distinguished Service Professor of Linguistics and of East Asian Languages and Civilizations.[4]

His knowledge, his kindness, and his sense of humor were legendary. His colleagues, who are not noted either for false modesty or lack of intellect, were in awe of him: to hear them tell it, they rarely—ever—were able to tell him anything he didn't already know more about than they did. While he laughed frequently, jokes at someone else's expense were simply not funny to him. When he leveled criticisms in print, which was often, it was ideas that he aimed his invective at, not the people responsible for them. Through his alter ego of Quang Phúc Đông, author of 'English sentences without overt grammatical subject', he was responsible for bringing into existence entire genres of humorous and satirical linguistics, for which (among other accomplishments) he was honored with what is surely the most unusual festschrift in the history of academic publishing—*Studies out in left field* (Zwicky et al. 1971; reprinted 1992), the linguistic equivalent of *National Lampoon*.[5]

He lived in Hyde Park, within walking distance of the university, rising after noon and retiring at dawn, in a prototypically untidy apartment (later a condo) jammed with a piano, a harpsichord, walls and walls of shelves loaded with books and journals (later videotapes as well), and a large and distinctively arrayed kitchen, where Jim practiced gastronomy, the third (beyond music and linguistics) of his great oral-aural passions. Just as he systematically worked his way through the keyboard repertory of his favorite composers, practicing daily on his harpsichord and piano (and swearing at his frequent mistakes), he systematically worked his way through most of the world's cuisines in that kitchen, regaling guests at his frequent dinner parties with whatever he was learning about at the time. As his obituary in the *New York Times* (Fox 1999) remarked,[6] 'his pigs' ears in garlic sauce remains etched in colleagues' memories'.

His first culinary love, however, was Chinese cuisine, on which subject he published in 1984 his most unusual book, *The eater's guide to Chinese characters* (McCawley 1984a—now, sadly, out of print),[7] which contained a small but eminently usable dictionary of Chinese characters, as well as tutorials in reading Chinese menus. This book was the basis of an essay about Jim by Calvin Trillin in the *New Yorker* (Trillin 1983), which describes what was a rite of passage for many linguists: going out for Chinese food with Jim McCawley.

Jim was a very gregarious person; his line was busy half the night, as he talked to people all over the world and in his local community as well. His parties were famous;

[4] While he was proud of this honor, it (characteristically) embarrassed him to have it pointed out in public. As I introduced him once to an audience at the University of Michigan, he interrupted me while I was intoning this dignified title, saying he usually just said that he was 'Professor of a whole buncha shit'. He did it again at his 1997 LSA presidential lecture, while being introduced by the secretary-treasurer.

[5] He was also the recipient of a more traditional festschrift (Brentari et al. 1992), and a posthumous collection of papers by his students is scheduled to appear (Francis et al. 2004).

[6] A remarkable work, described most appropriately in one memorial as 'an obituary to die for'.

[7] The University of Chicago Press deserves severe censure, which I hereby bestow, for allowing this book, as well as McCawley 1979b and 1982d, to go out of print permanently. As an author, Jim was faithful to his university's press, and was ill-served by such shoddy treatment, as is the profession of linguistics as a whole.

Jim's publications cited in this memorial are ordered and dated (i.e. '1984a') in the text and in the references section below as they are in Jim's complete bibliography, which is available at the University of Chicago Linguistics website at http://humanities.uchicago.edu/depts/linguistics/faculty/mccawl eycv.html, and thus is not reprinted here. Some of these references (e.g. McCawley 1979b below in references) contain descriptive material from that bibliography, cited as in the original.

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he hosted them on Bastille Day, on Hanggul Day (which he promoted as the international holiday par excellence for linguists), and during the Chicago Linguistic Society meeting in April every year. His sense of fun was immense and practical; he was instrumental in celebrating (and in some cases establishing the celebration of) a number of holidays at UC, including the St. Cecilia's Day concert, where a scratch orchestra of linguists plays, the Latkes-Homntashn Symposium at Purim, and Goodspeed Day in May (for which he composed his famous 'Days in the month of May that are of interest to linguists').[8] He was the soul and spirit of the University of Chicago linguistics department, and cast a long shadow in several other departments as well.

He was married once, to Noriko Akatsuka. They met in Santa Cruz in the summer of 1971, when she was a doctoral candidate in linguistics at the University of Illinois, became engaged (Jim traveled to Japan to formally ask Noriko's parents for their permission), and were married on December 16, 1971 (Beethoven's birthday: Jim delighted in celebrating his favorite composers' birthdays). The marriage ended in an amicable divorce in December 1978; Jim's family still regards her as 'Aunty Noriko'. During all his years at UC, even his closest linguistic colleagues tended to forget that Jim had grown up in Chicago and that (though his mother died in 1961 and his father in 1969) he still had a family in the area. He rarely spoke about himself, and appears to have kept his family and his career almost completely separate. After his death, his colleagues were surprised to find that his family got together frequently for holidays and that Uncle Jim was his nieces' and nephews' favorite, while his family members, for their part, were astonished to discover that he was famous.

And why was he famous? His personal integrity, charm, deep humanity, and prodigious intellect were sufficient to mark him indelibly in anyone's memory; indeed, everyone who knew him has dozens of Jim stories, which they delight in relating. These can be sampled at the web site maintained at UC in his honor, but all one really needs to do is ask any of his friends. This strength of character, however, is not what earned him membership in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, nor the presidency of this association. It does not explain the influence Jim McCawley had on his students, his colleagues, and the profession as a whole, nor his legacy for linguists everywhere. Nor does it explain the curious LACK of influence he has had in some areas of linguistics. That is a different matter altogether.

Jim's work in linguistics spreads across a number of areas, but he is principally known as a syntactician and a semanticist—though he refused to distinguish sharply between these roles. He characterized his approach as a 'revisionist version of transformational grammar', which

> exploits what I regard as the fruitful ideas of transformational grammar (constituency, multiple syntactic strata, the cyclic principle) and chucks out what I regard as counterproductive ideas (the metaphor of a 'base' structure, the idea of categories and structures as remaining constant throughout derivations, the fetish for keeping syntax and semantics separate).
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> [http://humanities.uchicago.edu/humanities/linguistics/facul ty/mccawley.html (1998)]

This description, from his web site, represents a theoretical end product. While it resembles in many ways the theory he started with in the late 1960s, it is a much larger, more useful, more sophisticated, and vastly more consistent grammatical theory than generative semantics ever was allowed to become.

This is not the place to rehearse the history of GENERATIVE SEMANTICS (GS); it has already been told, with great clarity and in great detail, by Harris 1993 and Huck &

[8] Available in the archives of LINGUIST at http://www.linguistlist.org/issues/3/3-418.html#2.

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Goldsmith 1994, 1995. Suffice it to say that Jim McCawley was a leading figure in the GS movement. Jim had made it all the way through the MIT Ph.D. program without doing much syntactic research when he was hired at Chicago. But in the spring term of 1965, he had to teach an English syntax course at UC. Since he was no longer at the fount of theory at MIT, and there wasn't anybody else from there for him to talk to at Chicago, he got on the phone to Cambridge to confer with George Lakoff and Haj Ross, who were at that time developing the theory of abstract syntax that was later to blossom into GS. This was the first of many, many productive phone calls.

The result was that Jim, who had been more or less agnostic about syntax before, became a convert to the GS way of looking at generative grammar. This approach came rather naturally to Jim, since it fit in nicely with his background in mathematics and logic, and since its arguments were driven principally by data, which was what fascinated him the most about language. He was probably the most important convert to GS, and he was certainly the most steadfast—for the rest of his professional career, unswayed (though often amused, and occasionally outraged) by the various syntactic theories that came and went at MIT and its 'branch offices',[9] he kept working steadily on his syntactic theory, gradually extending its reach, fixing bugs, adding more and more rules, accommodating more and more phenomena, until it reached its zenith in his reference grammar, simply and aptly titled *The syntactic phenomena of English* (1988f; 2nd edition 1998).[10]

He first came to the attention of the profession with his paper (McCawley 1968h) in Bach & Harms 1968, in which he proposed what can be seen in retrospect as a first draft of GS. Later, in his paper 'English as a VSO language' in this journal (McCawley 1970b), he presented to an international audience some implications of the syntactic cycle:

> To increase the likelihood of this paper's being intelligible, I will preface it with a brief summary (largely a restatement of research in unpublished papers by Ross and Lakoff) of an important notion that recurs in it, namely that of the CYCLE. (1970b:286, emphasis in original)

The type of argumentation in this paper is typical of Jim's approach, and of GS at its height: examples of multiple—ideally, unrelated—phenomena sharing a single structural characteristic, argumentation based on the implications of this, and a simple—albeit occasionally heretical—syntactic, derivational, solution for the resultant problems, which, ideally, helps explain some independent phenomena as well. The argumentation section begins, characteristically:

> Of the 15 transformations of English that I can argue must be in the cycle, there are ten for which it makes no significant difference whether they apply to structures with predicate first or predicate second . . . For the remaining five cyclic transformations, the underlying constituent order makes a significant difference in the complexity of the conditions under which the transformation applies, or in its effect. In each case, the version of the transformation that assumes predicate-first order is significantly simpler in the sense of either involving fewer elementary operations or applying under conditions which can be stated without the use of the more exotic notational devices that have figured in transformational rules. (1970b:292)

The argument proceeds with examples of each case, pointing always at simplifying the statement of the rules. This is also typical of the generative semantics esthetic, which

[9] As Jim was wont to say (see quotation below).

[10] This was not Jim's first choice of title. He had intended, in draft, to title his reference grammar *More than you probably wanted to know about English syntax*—which would have made a nice match with the title of his logic text: *Everything that linguists have wanted to know about logic (but were ashamed to ask)*—but was evidently dissuaded by UC Press.

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is based in part on Occam's razor—the multiplication of pluralities without empirical justification is to be eschewed, and analyses that simplify statements of complex phenomena are to be preferred, especially if they also simplify other, independent, phenomena.

The solution in this case is the conclusion that, while there is a principled and empirically verifiable difference between SOV (verb-final) languages and either VSO (verb-initial) or SVO (verb-second) languages, there is in fact much less empirical difference between the two latter types, so that they can be effectively considered identical at some 'deep' logical level, and differentiated only in a derivation by a simple syntactic rule in SVO languages that fronts the subject NP, whence the title of the paper. This analysis, in effect, reduces or relates a three-way (or six-way) typological split to a binary distinction between right- and left-branching languages, which in turn can be used to explain phenomena like the facts (presented in Ross 1970) that both SVO and VSO languages gap to the right, while SOV languages gap to the left.

The name 'generative semantics' itself was a reference to the title of a paper by Lakoff (1976, originally written in 1963) that stuck to the entire movement. Since it dealt with semantics as well as syntax, and it was generative in intent and method, most GS admirers found it an unproblematic name, though Jim eventually stopped using it—or any other name—for his syntactic theory, for reasons he called 'truth in labelling'.

> In McCawley 1981b I give a number of reasons for adopting the apparently perverse policy of refusing to name my approach to syntax. Probably the most important of these is that any name is bound to give undue prominence to some one of the many issues that distinguish this approach from others (the way that the name 'generative semantics' misleadingly suggested that the differences between generative semanticists and Chomskyan transformational grammarians had principally to do with the question of what part of a grammar they considered 'generative'). Instructors who feel the need for a name for the kind of syntax done in this book are hereby authorized to make up their own name for it, just as long as the name chosen is not too misleading. (McCawley 1988f; 1998:xix, n. 2)

All this was not happening in an intellectual vacuum, of course. While GS started as a natural extension of Chomsky's theories, it soon became clear that Chomsky did not feel that way about it, and the sides formed quickly for what Harris (1993) appropriately calls 'The Linguistics Wars'. At first it appeared that this was merely a venue for reasoned (if hotly contested) debate on the theories; accordingly, Jim's contributions were in the form of arguments for GS and against opposing theories, never indulging in the acrimony that characterized too much of the contest—Jim thought that nothing was ever settled by acrimony.

But it soon became apparent that this was a clash of personalities and ideologies, that reasoned debate was failing. In the event, it WAS a war, and generative semantics lost, for reasons that Huck and Goldsmith demonstrate were neither intellectual nor scientific, but were nevertheless definitive. The result was that GS was consigned to the linguistic purgatory reserved for officially 'unscientific' ideas, barred from serious consideration in the literature or in textbooks except as a quaint footnote, unread by and eventually unknown to the next generations of linguists.

This was a great disappointment to Jim, who nevertheless retained his essentially optimistic view of scientific discourse; he continued to read and publish voluminously and widely, though he never founded an official school of thought, nor attempted to create a cult of personality. As he put it,

> As an epistemological anarchist in the tradition of Feyerabend, I am delighted to have multiple frameworks being used. Even if I regard a certain framework as completely crackpotted, that doesn't mean

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> that it's not a resource that might be valuable to me. I share Feyerabend's idea that any framework is going to lead its adherents to come up with facts that quite likely you wouldn't come up with so easily in your own framework. So I regard the multiplicity of frameworks as highly desirable. . . . Newmeyer has described me and my generative semantics buddies as data fetishists, and I'm quite happy to be so described. (Cheng & Sybesma 1998:1, 26)

Although he had labored hard to refute Chomskyan theories, he eventually found better things to do, since refutation was obviously having no effect. His views about the values of refutations show up in a review of the last book of a particular hero of his, Paul Feyerabend:

> To derive intellectual benefit from an alternative tradition, one need not accept its premises and values; likewise, to ignore uncongenial ideas, one is not obliged to construct a refutation of them, which is just as well, since such a refutation usually can be constructed only by stacking the cards against adversaries about whom one is grossly ignorant. . . . constructing a refutation is liable to be a waste of time and to yield only a dishonest rationalization for returning to one's normal intellectual business. (McCawley 1990d:277)

This attitude was a better fit for Jim's temperament, since his anarchic/libertarian political principles—the same principles that led him to accept the Libertarian nomination for trustee of the University of Illinois three times (the vote totals are in his CV), to refuse to apply for or accept government funds for his research, or to participate in reviewing or recommending others for government funding—led him also to believe firmly that diversity was far preferable to uniformity in scientific enterprises:

> Working within a particular framework today doesn't imply that you have to work within the same framework tomorrow. It doesn't prevent you from stepping outside the framework. I teach courses that deal with frameworks other than the sort of very revisionist kind of transformational grammar that is represented in most of the stuff that I am doing myself. When I teach a course on Relational Grammar or Montague Grammar, I describe it as a tour, not a sight-seeing tour but a shopping tour. (Cheng & Sybesma 1998:1)

As he said, he was a 'data fetishist'—he was never so happy as when he discovered (or was told) some really surprising fact about a language. It took quite a lot to surprise him, but that didn't stop his students and colleagues from trying. He was a metapolyglot: he read everything, in every framework, and understood it, even if he didn't think much of it, and he could converse amicably with those whose native metalanguage was different from his. He WAS, certainly, of the opinion that the emperor had no clothes, and that nothing much worthwhile had come out of post-GS MIT theories over the decades.

> I am quite annoyed at a lot of stuff done in syntax recently, especially this absolutely screwy conception of syntactic categories that now prevails in the kinds of syntax coming out of MIT and its various branch offices. . . . In the 1980s I would say, 'What's right about X-bar syntax is the X and the bar. What's wrong is everything else'. . . . Since the mid 80's you've had all sorts of stuff other than parts of speech being used as the X of X-bar categories, as in this thing NegP that now turns up all over the place. . . . Actually, one of the things that annoys me about syntactic categories as they're treated in real recent MITish stuff is that it's really become hard for MITish people to say 'modifier' anymore. I mean, all sorts of things that to me are obvious modifiers now get represented as heads of things that they aren't heads of. This particular conception of categories has become undeservedly popular and is yielding seriously screwed-up analyses. (Cheng & Sybesma 1998:27)

This opinion shows up in some of his papers (some characteristically Jimmish titles: 'Infl′, Spec, and other fabulous beasts' (1989c); 'Negative evidence and the gratuitous leap from principles to parameters' (1991i)). But, having dutifully pointed out the naked

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truth like a good scientist, he was far too gentlemanly to leer at the sight. Besides, occasionally, even in seriously screwed-up theories, something interesting was found:

> I come into contact with things done in various approaches, like by thumbing through journals and by going to conferences and staying in the same room because it isn't worth the trouble to get up and move to another room. (It's like watching television.) I get exposed to all sorts of things, a whole lot of which have nothing particular to recommend them, but quite a few of which have interesting stuff. And if a certain approach seems to be leading somewhere, in that it recognizes or discovers interesting facts or that it appreciates the significance of things that have not been previously appreciated, then I'll look at more stuff done in that framework. (Cheng & Sybesma 1998:26)

Then he could 'charitably misrepresent' things that he found promising, by taking the interesting parts and leaving behind the theoretical baggage; he had a 'consumerist' attitude about theories, as he says in the preface to (the first edition of) his logic textbook:

> What the student can hope to get out of this book . . . includes . . . development of an awareness of the distinction between those details of standard formal logic that represent serious conclusions worth defending and those details that merely represent arbitrary decisions on the part of earlier logicians, and concomitant realization that standard versions of logic need not be accepted as package deals (this sort of perspective is of course something that linguistics students should hope to get not only from logic courses but also from their linguistics courses: a course in transformational syntax does a great disservice to students if it merely teaches them to do transformational analyses like a native but gives them no appreciation that those analyses embody both serious claims for which there is substantial backing and uncritical repetitions of features of earlier analyses that no one has seen fit to either provide support for or challenge). (McCawley 1993b:xvi (1st edn. 1981a))

or in remarks at a conference:

> A couple of weeks ago I gave a lecture here in which I said 'When you hear a linguist use the word ''explanation'', you should put your hand on your wallet'. I also think that when you hear a linguist use the word 'theory', you should put your hand on your wallet. Linguists generally follow the deplorable practice of offering their 'theories' as package deals and presenting arguments that have a bearing on certain points of the 'theory' as if they were arguments for the entire package, which they never are. (McCawley 1989a:83; originally delivered 1978)

Jim was of the opinion, frequently expressed, that theoretical statements were IOUs; that someone making simplifying or counterfactual assumptions in a theory owed it to his discipline eventually either to provide a satisfying account of them or to retract them, on pain of being adjudged intellectually bankrupt. He was very serious about his balance of payments in this regard, and kept careful track of his intellectual debts. Every time his work was republished, he was at pains to add notes to update it to the current state of his thinking, attacking his earlier work and discarding earlier arguments when he felt they were in error. For instance, twelve years after 'English as a VSO language', Jim said of it, in the introduction to *Thirty million theories of grammar*:

> I now regard the case that I offered [1970b] for deep VSO word order in English as very weak because of my gratuitous assumption that there is a deep constituent order, my reliance in some of the argument on the notational system for transformations that even in 1970 I regarded as pernicious, and my failure to identify the role of grammatical relations in some of the phenomena that I discussed; I now consider the VSO order that appears in structures I propose to be simply a makeshift way of indicating the grammatical relations between predicates and arguments. (McCawley 1982d:7)

He was especially dismissive of GRATUITOUS assumptions, on his own or anyone else's part; in that lecture he refers to above (1979i), he also articulated a principle that was characteristic of his disdain for them.

> I wish to dissociate myself from an assumption that is so popular among linguists that it is difficult to find anyone who disputes it, namely the assumption that people who talk the same have the same

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> linguistic competence. . . . Linguists are perpetually arguing about . . . alternative analyses, e.g. the analysis in which the English regular plural ending is /iz/ and a rule deletes its vowel under one set of circumstances, versus the analysis in which the ending is /z/ and a rule inserts a vowel under other circumstances. Maybe some people have learned plurals the one way and other people the other way. The assumption that all normal adult members of a linguistics community have the same internalized analysis in such cases is gratuitous. (McCawley 1979i:205)

The result of this careful bookkeeping was that, rather than marketing new and revolutionarily different versions of his theory every few years, Jim stayed in business by simply improving his theory incrementally, fixing bugs, making small revisions in it every time he got a good description of a new phenomenon, or he found a new way to handle some problem, or some new feature finally proved to be well motivated (as when he eventually added to it his 'very revisionist kind of' X-Bar theory),[11] but maintaining at each stage complete and up-to-date explications and justifications for each element in the theory, all grounded in (explicitly stated and well established) canonic first principles, documented in the literature for the future of the field. The result was that Jim's syntactic theory stayed completely consistent, jargon-free, and clearly articulated in all its complexities, in contrast to its competitors.

He followed the same principles in his studies of what he ranked as the second of his three major areas of research interest, which he called

> **Semantics/logic/pragmatics** (it's impossible to talk in any detail about any of these three fields without getting into the other two, so I don't even try to keep them separate). I teach courses on logic from a linguist's point of view, taking a broad view of the subject matter of logic (logic has suffered from 23 centuries of myopia, which I try to make up for) and giving full weight to linguistic considerations in revising (or replacing) existing systems of logic to maximize their contact with natural language syntax and linguistic semantics. (See my book, *Everything that linguists have always wanted to know about logic (but were ashamed to ask)*, University of Chicago Press, 2nd edition, 1993.) I also from time to time teach courses in lexical semantics, tense and aspect, and speech acts (with Erving Goffman sharing top billing with J. L. Austin).
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> [http://humanities.uchicago.edu/humanities/linguistics/facul ty/mccawley.html (1998)]

As always, his view was heterodox but sane, concerned principally with making use of logic for what he considered its prime purpose—describing natural language phenomena in a satisfying and well-established way. For instance, McCawley 1993b treats quantifiers in a section on 'the logicians' favorite quantifiers' (§2.4, pp. 36–44), in which, for example, he discusses all the ways in which *each*, *every*, *any*, and *all* vary in usage and meaning, despite the common logical assumption that they are all merely instantiations of the universal quantifier ∀. Then, in a very different section (§7.4, pp. 218–32) labeled 'Other quantifiers', he includes logical analyses of (among others) *many*, *a lot*, *a few*, *few*, *a couple/number of*, *three/several*, *not many*, *more than half*, and *over 50*.

Jim's logic book (1993b) and syntax book (1998), both in second edition, will probably be his most enduring contributions to the literature of linguistics. They are both reasonable and readable, and together they constitute a constructive proof that generative grammar can be used to describe language. They are designed for the future, both as textbooks and reference books, a hard combination to bring off (and one that took him two tries to achieve in each case). His other work is contained in hundreds of papers

[11] Limited to N′, V′, P′, A′, Adv′, and 0′ (ZERO-BAR: 'phrasal unit whose head belongs to no part of speech'); and distinguishing N′ from NP (which is not, like N′, a phrase headed by an N, but rather is a different type, outside the X-bar system—NP is the syntactic constituent type corresponding to the logical type PROPOSITION). This system is consistently and carefully used to great profit throughout McCawley 1998.

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and reviews, most of them difficult to obtain.[12] Luckily, these two books summarize and systematize most of what he thought was important to say in syntax, semantics, and logic. They likewise ignore ideas he thought deserved to be ignored, regardless of their origin, or the reverence with which others might view them.[13]

At his death, Jim had one book prepared for publication and was working on another. The first book, *Against virtue in syntax and semantics*, is an annotated collection of his papers; the second, which should complete the trilogy of his major theoretical works, but may take a while to appear, is described on his web page under the rubric of his third major area of research interest:

> **Linguistics and the philosophy of science.** Having taught a course on this subject every 3 years or so since the mid 70s, I am now writing a book entitled *A linguist's guide to the philosophy of science*. My research in this area involves both finding illustrations in linguistics of the ideas of the various philosophers that I discuss and using notions from linguistics to improve on their ideas, e.g. interpreting Kuhn's notion of the 'paradigm' of a scientific community as a set of markedness conventions governing activity within that community.
>
> [http://humanities.uchicago.edu/humanities/linguistics/facul ty/mccawley.html (1998)]

To all who knew him, Jim McCawley represented—without ever trying to—the best hope that linguistics would one day become a true science, that there was a real future for a discipline that appeared to be increasingly adrift and out of touch. Certainly, whenever I thought about Jim (which was frequently) over the thirty years I knew him, I felt a sense of joy and relief that he was still there, working away, getting wiser and wiser, finding more and more weird data, having more and more fun, able to solve any linguistic problem that *I* could ever think of. Then I'd look forward to seeing him at LSA or CLS and getting copies of his latest papers, finding out what he'd been up to, what outrages he'd uncovered, what scurrilous aphorisms he'd coined to expose them,[14] and what data had recently caused him to reach for his notebook while emitting that strange, low-pitched, descending whistle that we all recognized as Jim's ultimate accolade for REALLY interesting facts. Over dinner, if possible. [John Lawler, *University of Michigan.*]

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[12] Again, this is in part due to University of Chicago Press's neglect of his paper collections (1979b, 1982d). A final, authorized, definitive collection of all Jim's papers would be a welcome addition to the linguistic literature.

[13] For some examples of topics that didn't make the cut, see Rosta 2000.

[14] For example, 'MIT is a place where the Mind Fairy comes and leaves a quarter under your pillow'.

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