English Mediopassive[*]

AND ROSTA

(1a-b) exemplify the mediopassive construction. In (1a) it is understood that erotic books are sold. (1b) is uttered by Humphrey Bogart in *The big sleep* when someone, probably Lauren Bacall, is threatening to slap him.

(1)   a   Erotic books sell easily.
        b   I don't slap so good this time of the evening.

Section 1 discusses the syntax of this construction, and section 2 its semantics. (2) exemplifies the sort of sentence termed here 'reflexive mediopassive'.

(2)   Erotic books (practically) sell THEMSELVES.

Section 3 discusses the syntax and semantics of this sort of sentence.

1 The syntax of mediopassives

Passive and mediopassive can be handled using much the same machinery. Both are derived by word-formation relations. The passive and the mediopassive derivatives of a verb are instances of the verb.[1] In the simple passive (Hudson 1989, 1990, 1992) and mediopassive, (3a-b), the subject is also the verb's object, as shown in (4a-b). (5a-b) are the WG propositions that declare this structure.

(3)   a   Sophy was kissed.
        b   The car steers poorly.

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[1]Though Hudson (1989, 1990, 1992) treats passive as a morphosyntactic feature rather than a derivational relation, Rosta (in prep) handles diathetic alternation derivationally, and this generalizes to passive, without any apparent negative ramifications, and with a corresponding simplification of the morphosyntactic feature system.

(4)   a   <-subject--------------------------<
                 Sophy <-subject-< was >-xcomp-> kissed
       b   <-object----------------<
                 <-subject---------------<
                 the >-complement-> car steers >-adjunct-> poorly
(5)   a   subject of <u>passive of verb</u> = object of <u>it</u>
       b   subject of <u>mediopassive of verb</u> = object of <u>it</u>

Other things being equal, the grammar will be simpler if mediopassives
are generated not by novel devices but by the same devices that generate
passives. Passive and mediopassive are indeed strikingly similar. As is argued
below, a verb's mediopassivizability is, like its passivizability, not lexically
specific: any verb may mediopassivize providing it meets certain syntactic
conditions. For some speakers mediopassivizability conditions are only a small
subset of passivizability conditions, but for other speakers it appears that these
conditions are much closer to being the same as those required for passive;
any verb that can passivize can mediopassivize. Some speakers unhesitatingly
accept some or all of the 'prepositional mediopassives' in (6a-f), which are
analagous to the the prepositional passives in (7a-f).

(6)   a   Sophy looks after easily.
       b   The chair sits on easily.
       c   The cup drinks out of easily.
       d   The stove cleans underneath easily.
       e   The bed hid under easily.
       f   The wall scrawled on both sides of quite easily, because there was
            a doorway in it you could pass through.
(7)   a   Sophy was looked after.
       b   The chair is sat on.
       c   The cup is drunk out of.
       d   The stove is cleaned underneath.
       e   The bed was hidden under.
       f   The wall was scrawled on both sides of.[2]

Prepositional mediopassives receive virtually no mention in the
literature, including Quirk *et al.* (1985), though Keyser & Roeper (1984)
accept, with a query, the example *John laughs at easily*. Roberts (1986)

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[2]This construction is attested. Similar examples are in McCawley (1988) and Bolinger
(1974).

asterisks his examples. Stroik (1992) concurs with Fagan (1988), who declares all prepositional mediopassives ungrammatical, saying: "The native speakers I have consulted find them clearly ungrammatical". Fagan's informants may have found her examples 'unpragmatical' rather than ungrammatical.[3] Nevertheless, some speakers emphatically reject prepositional mediopassives, however convincing the conditioning pragmatic context is, while accepting, reasonably liberally, non-prepositional mediopassives. We may therefore conclude that prepositional mediopassives are grammatical for some but not all speakers. The simplest approach is to treat the lect of rejectors of prepositional mediopassives as, in this respect, a subset of the lect of those who accept them.

2 The semantics of mediopassives

Lakoff (1977) suggests that subjecthood is semantically associated with a prototype that has such features as volition, control and, most importantly, primary responsibility, so when the undergoer of some event is primarily responsible for the event, the undergoer is expressed as subject, hence the mediopassive. Van Oosten (1977) argues along the same lines. A problem with this account is that whereas a non-mediopassive subject doesn't have to have primary responsibility, as (8) shows, the referent of the mediopassive subject *must* be primarily responsible, but needn't be volitional or have any other feature of the subjecthood prototype.

(8)   Sophy hit the ground, after Arthur pushed her over.

The mediopassive subject referent is primarily responsible not simply because it is a subject referent but rather because the grammar explicitly states that the mediopassive subject referent is primarily responsible.

Primary responsibility belongs to the semantic domain Talmy (1985) calls 'force-dynamics'. Talmy recognizes two roles, Agonist and Antagonist, which oppose each other's force. We can add another role for the primarily responsible participant, which we shall call the Archagonist: this is the participant with greatest force, in terms of its capability of causing, instigating

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[3]Though this possibility applies to any unacceptability judgement, it is particularly pertinent to mediopassives, prepositional or not, the acceptability of which (as judged by informants) strongly correlates with the degree of the pragmatic context's comportment with the sentential semantics.

and maintaining the event. The grammar, then, contains the following proposition:

(9)   referent of subject of <u>mediopassive of verb</u> = archagonist of sense of <u>it</u>

This is the only mention the grammar makes of mediopassive semantics - in other words, this is all there is to mediopassive semantics; the rest of this section will deal with pragmatics.

It is commonly said that the referent of the subject of a mediopassive construction must be a patient (e.g. Lakoff (1977), van Oosten (1977), Fellbaum (1985)). Usually Patient is treated as one of a set of roles that includes Source, Goal, Location, etc. Vague though the notion of patienthood is, it would usually be assumed not to encompass the referents of the italicized words in (10a-e). These referents are, unlike patients, not typically understood to be affected. Furthermore, they all qualify better as Location, Path, Goal, etc. Yet (10a-e) all have paraphrases in the mediopassive construction, (11a-e).

(10)   a   Sophy hid under *the bed*.
         b   Sophy crossed *the bridge*.
         c   Sophy approached *London*.
         d   Sophy entered *the house*.
         e   Sophy forded *the river*.
(11)   a   The bed hides under easily.
         b   The bridge crosses easily.
         c   London approaches easily, when there's not much traffic.
         d   The house entered easily, once the barricades were removed.
         e   The river fords easily.

In (12a), paint and the ceiling must have distinct roles, for otherwise (12b) wouldn't be sylleptically odd. Yet (12c-d) both make good mediopassives.

(12)   a   Sophy sprayed the paint on the ceiling.
         b   !   The paint and the ceiling were sprayed.
         c   The paint sprayed easily.
         d   The ceiling sprayed easily.

We can conclude, therefore, that the mediopassive subject referent needn't be a patient.

We could try to invoke a role broader than Patient, like Role & Reference Grammar's Undergoer macrorole (Van Valin & Foley (1980)), but

this is unnecessary, for the only constraint on the mediopassive subject referent is that it is archagonist. There is an apparent further generalization concerning the 'Firstargument', which is the argument of the verb's sense that is expressed by the subject of the underived verb. The firstargument is selectionally restricted: for example, the firstargument of *eat* chews, swallows, digests, and so on.[4] The descriptive generalization is that, as in passive, the subject referent cannot be only the firstargument of the mediopassive verb: in addition to or instead of being the firstargument it must have some other semantic role. This role needn't be assigned by the referent of the (medio)passive verb itself - cf. *Sophy is believed to like madrigals.* For both passive and mediopassive the subject referent isn't actually prohibited from being the firstargument: mediopassive *Sophy scrubbed clean* and passive *Sophy was scrubbed clean* are still appropriate if Sophy scrubbed herself clean. It follows from the grammar that since the subject is also an object or a complement of a subordinate of the verb, its referent will bear whatever role it acquires through its complementhood.

What is more problematic is capturing the way the grammar doesn't rule one way or the other on whether the subject referent of passives and mediopassives is firstargument of the verb. The grammar states that the firstargument of the typical verb is the referent of its subject. This proposition applies by inheritance to passive verbs, because they are instances of the verbs they derive from, but it must be overridden because the subject referent of passive verbs may be but needn't be the verb's firstargument. In current WG the only adequate way to override the proposition is to combine it with its own negation in a disjunction: "referent of subject of passive of <u>verb</u> = firstargument of <u>it</u> OR NOT referent of subject of passive of <u>verb</u> = firstargument of <u>it</u>". This inelegance may not be called for with mediopassives, because there are reasons for thinking that mediopassives lack a firstargument altogether: comparing (13a-b), we see that both can receive a reading in which Sophy is seduced and willing, but only (13a) has a reading in which her seducer is willing. In (13a) willingness is predicated of either the subject referent of the verb or the firstargument of the verb, whereas in (13b) willingness is predicated only of the subject referent.

(13) a   Sophy was seduced willingly.
      b   Sophy seduced willingly.

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[4]Probably firstargument is equivalent to Bresnan & Kanerva's (1989) 'thematic subject' and Bresnan & Moshi's (1990) 'logical subject'.

Assuming that it is a fact about *willingly* that its referent may be predicated of the firstargument of its head or the referent of the subject of its head, one way to explain (13b)'s lack of the firstargument reading is for the grammar to state that mediopassives have no firstarguments. This might explain why mediopassives can't occur with agentive *by* as passives do:

(14) a   *! The car drives by Sophy easily.
      b   The car was driven by Sophy easily.

If the referent of the complement of *by* is the firstargument of the head of *by*, then a *by* depending on a mediopassive will be uninterpretable if its head has no firstargument.

We predict that the referent of the subject of a mediopassive can be any participant that is, in the context referred to by the verb, a archagonist. We therefore predict that mediopassives form an acceptability gradient determined by the oddity of construing the subject referent as a archagonist. For this reason *The car sees easily* is odder than *The car starts easily*, and (15a-f) (mostly borrowed from Roberts (1986)) are grossly unacceptable.

(15) a   !   Support throws best behind candidates in long campaigns.
      b   !   Fits throw easily in aristocratic circles.
      c   !   Evenings kill best in front of the TV.
      d   !   Conversations kill whenever he's around.
      e   !   Advantage takes of Sophy easily.
      f   !   Tabs keep on Sophy easily.

In the same way we can explain why Keyser & Roeper (1984) find (16a-d) inexplicably "ungrammatical"[5].

(16) a   "*"   French acquires easily.
      b   "*"   The arguments assume easily.
      c   "*"   The answer learns easily.
      d   !"*"   The answer knows easily.

None of the subject referents are very plausible archagonists in the situations referred to. (16d) is especially odd, because it involves force dynamics (as mediopassive necessarily does): because force-dynamics is a prototypical feature of events, (16d) therefore implies that knowing is an event. So (16d)

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[5]Throughout this paper, "*" represents a quoted grammaticality judgement.

is odd in the way *Sophy is knowing the answer* is - here the progressive tells us that the verb referent is, implausibly, an event. If we turn (16a-d) into Tough Movement sentences, we can see that only (16d) remains odd.

(17) a   French is easy to acquire.
      b   The arguments are easy to assume.
      c   The answer is easy to learn.
      d   !   The answer is easy to know.

(17a-c) are not odd, because the subject referent in the Tough Movement construction need not be a archagonist.

Van Oosten (1977) claims (18a-b) as counterexamples to the claim that the subject referent is primarily responsible:

(18) a   A: You didn't leave enough of a margin on the bottom of the page.
              B: No, it just photocopied too low.
      b   You think you understand the difference between the three voices in Greek and how to translate each one but then once in a while you come across a verb that won't translate right.

Clearly the page is not responsible for its being photocopied too low, and a Greek verb does not determine whether there exists an English one to translate it. But the rhetoric of the examples deliberately suggests otherwise. In both cases the speaker is faced with an adverse circumstance, and seeks, as we do, to blame someone or something (other than themself). The very use of the mediopassive in (18a-b) serves to pass the blame, by imputing archagonism to page and verb.

We are also able to explain acceptability differences (noted by Lakoff (1977)) between different verbs in the mediopassive. (19a) is more normal than (19b) because bean curd is more likely to be archagonist of digestion than of eating.

(19) a   Bean curd digests easily.
      b   Bean curd eats easily.

The contrasting normality of (20a-b) is explained along the same lines: rocks are primarily responsible for their being inedible, and the difficulty of eating chicken bones is mainly due to the nature of chicken bones.

(20)   a   Chicken bones don't eat easily.
       b   Rocks don't eat at all (unless you've steel jaws).

We can also explain why mediopassives tend to occur with certain adverbs like *easily* and *slowly* (Dixon (1991) gives a list of these items). The grammar in no way demands the presence of such words: they simply turn up so frequently because the contribution of their meaning to the verb's sense makes it much more plausible that a non-firstargument is archagonist. Consider *The book read quickly/easily*: that the reader could read the book at all is most likely contingent on properties of the reader, such as literacy, but that reading was quick or easy is relatively more likely to be contingent on properties of the book, such as liveliness of style. If no adverb is used, the implication is that the archagonist is responsible for the event happening or not happening at all: this is possible (e.g. *The judge bribed, yesterday*) but only in less usual contexts.

The use of negative or emphatic auxiliaries, as in (21a-b) is prevalent when the aspect is habitual, because we will typically have prior expectations that the car will or won't steer: communication about whether the car will or won't steer is likely to be relevant when these expectations are contradicted, so the auxiliaries are used. As Roberts (1986) notes, contrasive stress may also be used, (21c). In the absence of expectations of this sort, the absence of any adverb does not give rise to oddity, as Fagan (1988) notes: cf. (21d).

(21)   a   The car won't steer.
       b   The car WILL steer, after all.
       c   Bureaucrats BRIBE.
       c   The dress zips up.

(21d) poses a potential problem for the parsimonious semantics proposed above for the mediopassive: the dress is not habitually the archagonist of events of it zipping up. Rather, as Dixon (1976, 1991), Lakoff (1977), van Oosten (1977) and Fagan (1988) note, the dress habitually being zipped up - or its ability to be zipped up - is contingent on properties of the dress, i.e. its having a zip, rather than, say, buttons. (21d) can be explained if we assume a verb with 'habitual aspect' to have generic reference: the verb with generic reference refers to its own (intrasentential) sense (cf. Hudson (1990) on generic nouns). Generic reference implies some type instantiated by multiple tokens: for example, *The five-legged frog is not yet extinct* implies there are some instances of a type of frog that has five legs. If *Sophy writes poetry* is generic, it implies a multiply instantiated type, Sophy writing poetry.

To understand (21d) we must be aware of the distinction Smith (1975) draws between 'class generics', (22a), and 'individuated generics', (22b). The typical dodo is not extinct - the species is - but the typical dodo ate figs.

(22)   a   John studies *the dodo*, which is extinct.
        b   John studies *the dodo*, which ate figs.

In (23), *for an hour a day* specifies the duration of each token (an event of Sophy jogging), and *for five years* specifies the duration of the type (a state); it is not the case that each instance of Sophy jogging lasted five years. A formalization of this is beyond the present capabilities of Word Grammar.

(23)   Sophy jogged for an hour a day for five years.

(24a-b) illustrate two sorts of generic mediopassive.

(24)   a   The dress zips up regularly/habitually.
        b   The dress doesn't button up: it zips up.

In (24a) we have a situation in which the dress is regularly archagonist of its being zipped up. The dress is archagonist of the verb referent qua individuated generic: the dress is archagonist of each event in which the dress is zipped up. But in (24b) - a version of (21d) - we have a generic situation which is potentially instantiated by events in which the dress is zipped up but is not archagonist. What makes (24b) a normal mediopassive in this case is that the dress is archagonist of the verb referent qua class generic: the existence of a generic zipping up of the dress is contingent on the dress, specifically on its having a zip.[6]

In the literature on mediopassives there has developed a consensus that mediopassives referring to events are ungrammatical: see e.g. Keyser & Roeper (1984), Fellbaum (1985), Fagan (1988); Roberts (1986) offers a Government-Binding theoretic syntactic explanation for this alleged fact. Firstly, I shall contrast Keyser & Roeper's (1984) claims with a demonstration that in at least the lects of my informants mediopassives can refer to events.

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[6]By analogy we might expect *Sophy melts ice* to be ambiguous between "Sophy regularly causes the ice to melt" (Sophy archagonist/causer of individuated generic) and "Sophy causes [ice melts]" (Sophy archagonist/causer of class generic). But, for some reason, the latter reading isn't possible from *Sophy melts ice*, though it is available for *Sophy causes ice to melt* (with Sophy as a god, if *ice* is generic, or if *ice* is indefinite then with Sophy tampering with a fridge so that some ice habitually melts and refreezes).

Keyser & Roeper find (25a), referring to an event, odd. But (25b-c) are not odd.

(25) a "?" Yesterday, the mayor bribed easily, according to the newspaper.
      b At long last, the haunted house sold.
      c *Crime and punishment* read slowly, as Sophy grew ever more bored.

Because depictives and progressive verbs refer to events, Keyser & Roeper judge (26a) and (27a-c) ungrammatical,[7] but (26b-c) and (27d-f) show mediopassives referring to events to be happy in these constructions.

(26) a "*" I saw bureaucrats bribe easily.
      b   Sophy saw the haunted house sell.
      c   We filmed that bureaucrat bribing all too easily.
(27) a "*" The floor is waxing.
      b "*" Greek is translating.
      c "*" The chicken is killing.
      d   How was your car driving yesterday?
      e   Bureaucrats are bribing (easily) left right and centre.
      f   *Crime and punishment* was reading slowly.

Furthermore, Keyser & Roeper claim that ergative verbs (in Burzio's sense) can occur in imperatives, (28a-c), whereas mediopassive verbs can't, (29a-c). Imperatives almost always refer to events.

(28) a   Sink, boat!
      b   Close, door!
      c   Bounce, ball!
29   a "*" Wax, floor!
      b "*" Translate, Greek!
      c "*" Kill, chicken!

Because the referent of an imperative is usually an action, and the addressees here are atypical actors, both (28a-c) and (29a-c) are slightly odd; but there is no oddity difference between them. If we find mediopassives whose subject referents have some agentive properties, they come out fine:

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[7]Bresnan (1982b) finds mediopassives incompatible with the progressive, too.

(30) a Stand still and photograph properly, will you!
     b Seduce, will you! Don't be so coy!

Moreover, it is quite normal to attribute agentivity to mediopassive subject referents, through a metaphor whose tenor is force-dynamic:

(31) a The floor refused to wax.
     b The Greek refused to translate.
     c Sophy refused to seduce. [= be seduced]

Although mediopassives can refer to events, we do predict that mediopassives will characteristically have generic and therefore usually stative referents. For example, if the properties of some car are such that it permits driving without much effort from the driver, it is likely that these properties are fairly constant, applying generally to any event in which the car is driven. To refer to such a situation we naturally use that form of mediopassive in which the subject referent is archagonist of the generic situation.

This explanation is the reverse of Fagan's (1988), who argues that the mediopassive is used to ascribe properties to the subject referent; it then supposedly follows that mediopassives will be stative (cf. *Sophy is tall*).[8] Of course Fagan fails to explain eventive (non-generic) mediopassives, but then she denies their existence. Furthermore, generic referents of verbs may, qua class-generics, be eventive if the internal dynamics of the class-generic situation are such that it will tend to cease: an example is *Sophy is swimming a lot these days*.

The claim that mediopassives must be stative is therefore not equivalent to a claim that mediopassives must have generic referents. It is the former claim that is now standard in the linguistics literature. I have shown that this claim is false for some lects. Further, I contend that this claim is false for all lects: in no other part of the grammar, including the lexicon, is stativity obligatory, and there is no reason to expect or believe mediopassives to be an exception. However, if we reinterpret the stativity claim to be a claim that mediopassives must be generic, some credence is warranted. Even though the cited discussions generally neglect to seek pragmatic explanations for the alleged ungrammaticality of the relevant data, it is quite plausible that in some

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[8] Aside from the issues of genericity and aspect, Fagan's account needs to be enriched to add the notion of archagonist in order to predict the acceptability difference (for those who discern one) between *!Delphiniums touch/admire easily* and *Delphiniums are easy to touch/admire* (the subject in the tough-movement construction needn't be archagonist).

lects the pragmatic tendency for mediopassives to have generic referents has been grammaticalized (i.e. brought into the semantics): so, the grammars of these lects may include a proposition stating that the referent of a mediopassive is generic.

Levin (1982) claims that the implicit agent in a mediopassive construction is quantified by "a generic quantifier, Q, which is intended to be read 'people in general' or 'one'". So she paraphrases (32a) by (32b-d). Fellbaum (1985) demurs, stating that (32a) is paraphrased by (33a-c) instead."

(32) a   This car handles smoothly.
      b   People in general handle this car smoothly.
      c   One handles this car smoothly.
      d   This car is handled smoothly by people in general.
(33) a   People in general can handle this car smoothly.
      b   One can handle this car smoothly.
      c   This car can be handled smoothly by people in general.

Levin and Fellbaum (and Fagan (1988)) are wrong to claim that the implicit agent is necessarily non-specific or generic: when the verb referent is a specific event the implicit agent will be specific. The implicit agent is typically non-specific, because mediopassives typically occur as habituals, and implicit arguments of habituals (like the thing written in *Sophy writes*) are usually - though not always - non-specific. (34a) shows that non-habitual mediopassives can have implicit but specific arguments. (34b) (from Deirdre Wilson (pc)) and (34c) (from Stroik (1992)) show that habitual mediopassives can have implicit but specific arguments. (34d) shows this to apply to habituals in general rather than just mediopassive habituals.

(34) a   The judge bribed easily enough once Sophy'd doubled the bribe.
      b   The car drives easily when I drive it.
      c   Books about herself read easily for Mary.
      d   Sophy reads arduously when she's reading *Crime and punishment*.

Probably the implicit argument is understood as non-specific only in the absence of any obvious specific referent.

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[9]The justness of Fellbaum's quibble depends on the modality of habituals. It is not relevant to the points at issue. Her intuition that can is appropriate is explained by the car being archagonist: it is the car that enables easy driving.

A last issue to consider is which verbs can have a mediopassive derivative. Syntactically there are very few constraints, though for rejectors of prepositional mediopassives the verb must have an object. Semantically, there is no constraint whatever: any verb qualifying on syntactic grounds will not be prohibited on semantic grounds. Levin & Rapoport (1988), following Hale & Keyser (1987),[10] claim that mediopassives are grammatical only if the verb sense is a caused change of state, the crucial part of the claim being that CAUSE must be present in the Lexical-Conceptual Structure of the verb: their grammaticality judgements show *split, cut* and *fry* are in, and *paint, save* and *hit* are out. Their claim would wrongly predict the unacceptability of *The book reads well*.

Levin & Rapoport's judgements are explicable only if their lects lack mediopassive altogether, though this is hard to believe. This would explain why *paint, save* and *hit* are out. *Split* and *fry* could be in in their underived (non-causative, 'ergative', 'inchoative') form. But this can't be true of *cut*, whose underived form is transitive. *Cut* may be in as a derived intransitive (*Paper cuts*, cf. *Paper tears/folds*): there is evidence that any transitive verb whose sense involves a change of state has a derivative that is genuinely intransitive. Briefly, the evidence is that, as Williams (1980, via Bresnan 1982a) noticed, *away* (meaning "continuing impervious to hindrance") cannot, for some reason, depend on a verb that has an object:

(35) a   Sophy was dancing away (*a jig) like there was no tomorrow.
     b   The logs were getting chopped away at.
     c   *   The logs were getting chopped away.
     d   *   Sophy was patting the cushion away.
     e   *   The cushion was patting away.

But apparently mediopassive verbs that refer to a change of state can be the head of *away*:

(36) a   *   Sophy was slicing the bread away.
     b   The bread was slicing away.
     c   The books were selling away like hotcakes.
     d   The paper was cutting away nicely when the scissors broke.

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[10] I have not yet been able to consult this work.

The unexpected conclusion is that even though they involve implicit agents, the verbs in (36b-d) are derivatives that lack objects, like the non-mediopassive, "ergative" (37a-c).

(37)   a   The plague victims were dying away like flies.
       b   The bacon is frying away nicely.
       c   The logs were splitting away, left right and centre.

Superficially intransitive verbs referring to a change of state (irrespective of whether the change is caused by some agent) may be either mediopassive or genuinely intransitive.

3 The reflexive mediopassive

Reflexive mediopassives are constructions like *The car virtually drives ITSELF*. There's a characteristic stress on the reflexive pronoun. We'll look at the syntax first, and first of all try to establish the nature of the reflexive pronoun in this construction. There are at least three sorts of reflexive pronoun in English, which we'll call 'complement', 'autonomy' and 'emphasis'. (38a-c) illustrate them.

(38)   a   Sophy found some pictures of herself. [complement reflexive]
       b   Sophy drove the car HERSELF. [autonomy reflexive]
       c   The queen herself used to wear nappies. [emphasis reflexive]

All three can cooccur: cf. (39a) or even (39b), which mean "Sophy too shaved her own body without assistance", in which there is complement plus autonomy plus (extraposed in (39b)) emphasis (- the only possible order, I think).

(39)   a   Sophy herself shaved herself herself.
       b   Sophy shaved herself herself herself.

And usages of reflexives can be ambiguous: (40a) can be read as any of (40b-d).

(40)   a   Sophy (practically) melted HERSELF.
       b   Sophy (practically) caused HERSELF to melt. [complement reflexive]

    c   No one helped her to (practically) melt; Sophy (practically) melted
        HERSELF. [autonomy reflexive]
    d   (Indeed,) Sophy herself melted. [emphasis reflexive]

Quirk *et al.* (1985), as well as Fiengo (1980), don't distinguish
autonomy reflexives from emphasis reflexives, analysing autonomy reflexives
as extraposed emphasis reflexives. It is true that emphasis reflexives can
extrapose (as in *Indeed, the king laughed HIMSELF*), but the three types can
nevertheless be distinguished by five points of difference. These are outlined
below and then summarized in Table 1.

i.   The complement reflexive has no sense. The autonomy reflexive means
roughly "on one's own, without assistance". The emphasis reflexive is used for
emphasis; (41b) could paraphrase (41a).

(41)   a   His hair itself turned white.
        b   His very hair turned white. Even his hair turned white.

ii.   The complement reflexive is always a complement. Autonomy and
emphasis reflexives are adjuncts.

iii.   Autonomy reflexives are adjuncts of verbs. Emphasis reflexives are
adjuncts of nouns. Exceptionally, emphasis reflexives can occur cataphorically,
but still with a nominal head, as in (42), from Quirk *et al.* (1985).[11]

(42)   Himself a fervent believer, Newman was always sympathetic...

iv.   Unless it is used cataphorically, the antecedent of an emphasis reflexive
is the referent of its head, and its head is not omissible:[12]

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    [11]Examples like (i-v) are problematic: they appear to contain emphasis reflexives that
have no obvious nominal head.

i.   Himself having been fervent, Newman was always sympathetic.
ii.   Having been fervent himself, Newman was always sympathetic.
iii.   Having himself been fervent, Newman was always sympathetic.
iv.   Himself fervent, Newman was always sympathetic.
v.   Fervent himself, Newman was always sympathetic.

    [12]A possible exception:
     A: Shut up!
     B: Shut up yourself!

(43)   *   Yourself hit it. [= you yourself hit it]

The antecedent of an autonomy reflexive must be the referent of the subject of its head. The antecedent of a complement reflexive can be many things; cf. Hudson (1990). The antecedent of both autonomy and complement reflexives may be omitted:

(44)   a   Hit yourself.
    b   Hit it yourself.

v.   The antecedent of the emphasis reflexive must be definite:

(45)   a   The queen herself is left-handed.
    b   *!   A queen herself is left-handed.
(46)   a   The queen, who herself is left-handed, ...
    b   *!   Who herself is left-handed?

(If (46b) has a rising nuclear tone on *who* it is an acceptable echo question, but the *who* would be replacing a definite nominal in an antecedent utterance.) But there's no such requirement for autonomy or complement reflexives:

47   a   A queen did it herself.
    b   A queen hit herself.

	Complement	Autonomy	Emphasis
Sense?	no	yes	yes
Function	complement	adjunct	adjunct
Head	V,P	V	N (only?)
Antecedent omissible?	yes	yes	no(?)
Indefinite antecedent OK?	yes	yes	no

Table 1.

There might be a sixth difference between the reflexive types. Fellbaum (1989) claims that the autonomy reflexive must occur with an active verb with an object.

(48) a !*"*" Sophy arrived HERSELF.
      b !*"*" Sophy swam HERSELF.
      c !*"*" Sophy was kissed HERSELF.
      d   Sophy built it HERSELF.

Autonomy reflexives go best with verbs referring to accomplishments (in the sense of Vendler (1967)). If Fellbaum's oberservation has exceptions, it might be in examples like (49a-c), with objectless verbs referring to accomplishments. (49b) seems pretty much okay, and (49c), with an invented verb *to onetwothree*, meaning the accomplishment of counting up to three, also seems okay as far as one can intuit.

(49) a ? The parents were finishing tying the children's shoelaces, but one little girl finished HERSELF.
      b   One man even washed up HIMSELF.
      c   A slightly older girl onetwothreed HERSELF.

If any of (49a-c) are okay, then Fellbaum's interpretation of the data can perhaps be explained by the fact that almost all accomplishments have objects or at least prepositional complements (Dowty (1979)). Whether the head of the autonomy reflexive must have an object or must have an accomplishment as its sense, either restriction is unexplained.

Now that we have distinguished these three types of reflexive, we should ask which type occurs in the reflexive mediopassive construction. It isn't the emphasis reflexive, for this can be added to a reflexive mediopassive:

(50) And the books themselves practically sell THEMSELVES.

So the reflexive mediopassive contains the autonomy or the complement reflexive, in structures represented by (51a-b) respectively. Lakoff (1977) and Fellbaum (1989) take it to be a complement reflexive. Fiengo (1980) takes it to be some sort of emphatic-cum-autonomy reflexive. As I shall argue below, both (51a-b) are grammatical. (51a) contains an autonomy reflexive and (51b) a complement reflexive.

(51) a   <-object--<
      Erotic <-adjunct-< books <-subject-< sell >-adjunct-> themselves
   b Erotic <-adjunct-< books <-subject-< sell >-object-> themselves

The grammar predicts the possibility of (51a); it is a normal mediopassive with an adverbial adjunct (the autonomy reflexive), syntactically and semantically equivalent to *Erotic books sell without assistance*. If (51a) is not generated, we must introduce devices to rule it out, but at present there seems no reason why we should do so. Note that even if Fellbaum is right in claiming that autonomy reflexives depend only on active verbs with objects, (51a) is possible, because the verb is active (i.e. not passive) and it has an object (*the book*).[13] (52a-c) are evidence for the (51a) structure. If an adjunct may intervene between the verb and the reflexive, then the reflexive can't be a complement reflexive.

(52) a Because Sophy was carrying mistletoe, the church practically circled widdershins thirteen times at midnight ITSELF.
   b The book practically sold like hotcakes for three weeks in France last year ITSELF.
   c The car practically drives (for) a hundred yards ITSELF.

Contrast (52c) with the unacceptable (53), in which the object is separated from its head by what is presumably an adjunct.

(53) !* Sophy drove (for) a hundred yards the car.

The structure of (51b) is certainly possible on a non-mediopassive-type reading, with an underived verb. There is also an option that there is a derivational relation Reflexive-mediopassive such that the reflexive-mediopassive of a verb inherits all properties of the verb, and has the requirements that it must have a reflexive pronoun as object and the referent of its subject must be a archagonist and not a firstargument.
      There is evidence for the (51b) structure as well as the (51a). When a verb has a reflexive object and a particle, (54a-b) are the normal patterns.

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[13]On Fellbaum's view, there must, though, be a complement reflexive in *Geraniums pretty much look after THEMSELVES*, because the verb has no object.

(54) a   Sophy puts herself DOWN. [normal stress and word-order]
      b   Sophy puts HERSELF down. [contrastive stress, normal word
                order]
      c   *! Sophy puts DOWN herself.
      d   Sophy doesn't put down the heavy-NP shifted NOUN phrase
                - she puts down HERSELF. [abnormal stress and word order
                induced by parallelism]

(55) is the order and stress pattern you get with particle plus autonomy
reflexive adjunct.

(55)   A man washed up HIMSELF.

Now if you take mediopassives like (56a-b) and then convert them into
reflexive mediopassives you can get either (57a-b) or (58a-b).

(56) a   The tent puts up easily.
      b   The plates wash up easily.
(57) a   The tent practically puts ITSELF up.
      b   The plates practically wash THEMSELVES up.
(58) a   The tent practically puts up ITSELF.
      b   The plates practically wash up THEMSELVES.

(57a-b) have the word order and stress of (54b), not (55); therefore, (57a-b)
contain a contrastively or emphatically stressed complement reflexive. (58a-b)
have the word order and stress of (54d) and (55). As (58a-b) are not
necessarily conditioned by the parallelism necessary for the acceptability of
(54d), we can conclude that (58a-b) have the pattern of (55) and therefore
contain an autonomy reflexive. Evidently, then, some sentences described as
'reflexive mediopassive' have the structure of (51a), while others have the
structure of (51b).
      Our next step is to consider whether (51b) could contain a derived form
of the verb. Effectively advocating the view that the verb in the reflexive
mediopassive is underived, Lakoff (1977) argues that whereas (in his view) the
mediopassive subject is a patient, the referent of the reflexive mediopassive
subject is an agent. He claims that (59a-c) are odder than (60a-c) because the
subject referents make odd agents.

(59) a ! This scotch (practically) drinks itself.
      b ! My bicycle (practically) rides itself.
      c ! My dissertation (practically) reads itself.
(60) a   This scotch drinks easily.
      b   My bicycle rides easily.
      c   My dissertation reads easily.

The comparison is biased, however, because in (60a-c) the subject referents are archagonists of an event occurring *easily*, whereas the subject referents in (59a-c) are archagonists of an event occurring *at all*. So (59a-c) should really be compared to (61a-c), which are equally odd.[14]

(61) a ! This scotch (practically) drinks.
      b ! My bicycle (practically) rides.
      c ! My dissertation (practically) reads.

The issue of whether (51b) could contain a derivative verb hinges largely on whether an underived verb could be relied on to give rise to the required reading. It is obvious that (51b) can contain an underived verb, as in (62a-b).

(62) a   Sophy ate the apple.
      b   The apple ate itself.

But if (62b) contains underived *eat*, the subject referent is the selectionally restricted firstargument of *eat*: the apple chews and swallows itself. This is not a mediopassive-type reading. What if hedges and stress are added?

(63) The apple practically ate ITSELF.

The stress is shifted onto the reflexive for emphasis and contrast, but the emphasis and contrast pertains not to the apple as eatee but to the apple as eater. Since the reflexive is coreferential with the subject, emphasizing and contrasting the object referent therefore emphasizes and contrasts the subject referent. (63) paraphrases as (64).

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[14]The appropriate comparison for (60a-c) is with !*This scotch practically drinks itself easily*. Why this sentence is unacceptable remains to be explained. (For reasons of space I have not criticized Fiengo's (1980) and Fellbaum's (1989) explanations here.)

(64) There was an event approximating to an apple (of all things!) eating itself.

(64) is compatible with a context in which an apple is primarily responsible for its being eaten, but only because (64) is so vague.

Yet reflexive mediopassives can occur unhedged, (65a-b) ((65a) from van Oosten (1977)), and, moreover, in contexts like (65c), the subject referent is incontrovertibly a archagonist and not a firstargument - the firstargument of *father* must be male.[15] Even when unhedged, reflexive mediopassives are equivalent in meaning to *get*-passives: *The tiramisu got itself eaten*, *Sophy got herself fathered*. The tiramisu doesn't swallow itself; the clothes don't part with money in order to own themselves; no sperm of Sophy's fertilizes her mother's ovum.

(65) a How come you've so many clothes? Well, I can't help it; they just bought themselves.

 b I know I'm supposed to be dieting but the tiramisu just eats ITSELF.

 c Sophy put up so little resistance to her conception that she fathered extremely easily; indeed, she pretty well fathered HERSELF.

Rather than rely on pragmatics to decide that the subject referent is archagonist but not firstargument, even in the absence of hedges, we could invoke a Reflexive-mediopassive derivational relation, which was alluded to above. This would have almost the same syntax and semantics as the mediopassive, differing from it only in that whereas the subject of the mediopassive actually *is* the object of the mediopassive, the subject of the reflexive-mediopassive is only *coreferential* with the object of the reflexive-mediopassive. Providing that Mediopassive is a subtype of Reflexive-mediopassive, the addition Reflexive-mediopassive makes to the complexity of the grammar is negligible: the grammar states that the referent of the subject of a reflexive-mediopassive verb is (i) a archagonist, (ii) not a firstargument, and (iii) the object referent; because it is a subtype of Reflexive-mediopassive, statements (i-iii) also apply to Mediopassive, and a

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[15]An example analagous to (65c) could be constructed containing *rape*, since women cannot commit rape, yet despite this have nevertheless sometimes been cruelly held to be primarily responsible for being raped.

solitary further proposition states that the subject of a mediopassive verb is also its object.[16] The upshot is, then, that if pragmatics cannot be relied on to ensure mediopassive-type readings from the syntactic structure of (51b), Reflexive-mediopassive derivation could do the job instead, while adding next to no complexity to the grammar.

There are a couple of residual points to address. Firstly, why is oddity reduced so much by hedges like *practically/virtually/pretty well/pretty much/as good as/as much as/...*? As we've seen, if the verb is underived, the subject is firstargument of the verb: for these sentences to get a mediopassive-type reading, hedges help to indicate that the subject referent is not firstargument. If the verb is mediopassive, the sentence means "without assistance, X is archagonist of E occuring at all", and if the verb is reflexive-mediopassive, the meaning is "X is archagonist of E occuring at all". As the subject referents don't actually instigate the events but only strongly affect them, their archagonism is hedged. Nevertheless, as (65a-b) showed, hedges aren't obligatory. The subject referent can, indeed, be fully a archagonist, as in (66a-c). In (66a-b) the solution is seen as archagonist because it seems to appear out of nowhere, not put forward by any particular person, or not the result of lengthy cogitation. (Note too the stress placement.)

(66) a   Another solution SUGGESTS itself.
      b   A solution PRESENTED itself.
      c   Sophy PRESENTED herself.

Both *suggest* and *present* can occur also in more typical reflexive mediopassives:

(67) a   This solution virtually suggests ITSELF - I hardly need to bother suggesting it.
      b   This solution virtually presents ITSELF - it is so intrinsically clear that it is trivially easy to explain.

Lastly, we deal with Fellbaum's (1989) claim that the subject referent of a reflexive mediopassive can't be a potential agent. This seems to be false. It is true that when the subject referent is easily taken for an agentive firstargument this can be a source of oddity, but the grammar makes no prohibitions on this score, as (68a-c) should confirm. In (68a) the judge is primarily responsible for her being bribed, but she doesn't give herself money;

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[16]Prepositional mediopassives are ignored in this discussion, for the sake of simplicity.

she receives money only from others. In (68b-c) Sophy puts up so little resistance that she can be viewed as being primarily responsible for the laceration or seduction, but she does not wield a blade or persuade anyone into sexual relations.

(68) a   So easily does the utterly corrupt and cretinous judge bribe, she virtually bribes HERSELF.

      b   So feebly does Sophy defend herself from laceration, she pretty well lacerates herself.

      c   Sophy seduces so easily that she practically seduces HERSELF.

4 Conclusion

Mediopassive is a complex area of grammar - even notoriously so. Nevertheless, the account given here is comprehensive yet parsimonious. Mediopassive is a derivational relation. The mediopassive construction uses the same syntax as passive (or a subset thereof), though whether passive and mediopassive are alike in all aspects of their complementation has not been considered (e.g. whether *Sophy believes to be a fool easily* is ungrammatical).[17] The reflexive mediopassive construction may contain an underived, mediopassive or, perhaps, reflexive-mediopassive form of the verb.

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[17]As it happens, mediopassive's complementation is only a subset of passive's:

!*   Sophy makes (to) run easily.

!*   Sophy sees naked/swimming/healed/being kissed easily.

!*   Sophy considers clever easily.

!*   Books give Sophy easily.

!*   Sophy gives a book/kiss easily.

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