Making the case that form and meaning in English 'extraposition' and 'cleft' constructions match

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The transformational tradition has bequeathed to us accounts of extraposition (1a) and cleft (2a) constructions, which treat them as phenomena *sui generis*, unrelated to other constructions and analyzable only as *form-meaning mismatches* deriving from more basic variants, viz. the non-extraposed construction (1b) and the 'de-clefted' simple proposition (2b). In these accounts, subject *it* and verb *be* are viewed as (largely) devoid of meaning.

(1a) It was a wonder to them that I get to do all this stuff. (WB)
(1b) That I get to do all this is a wonder to them.

(2a) Ideally, there would be a (discreet) knock on the door and Laura would come in … The door did open but it was Cassie who entered. (WB)
(2b) Cassie entered.

Against this, I advocate an analysis that treats the constructions in (1a) and (2a) as members of larger construction paradigms, i.e. complementation constructions (Davidse & Van linden forthc.) and cleft constructions in the broad sense (Davidse 2000, Lambrecht 2001), which subsume a similar range of matrices, viz. copulars with *it* (1a, 2a), or marginally *that* (1c, 2c), existentials (1d, 2d), and clauses with *have* (1e, 2e). I argue that the complementation constructions (1a,c,d,e) and the 'cleft' constructions (2a,c,d,e) are each characterized by a distinct functional-structural assembly, which *naturally* codes their semantics (Langacker 2017), and to which the different matrix types contribute finer meaning differences (cf. Méndez-Naya 1995, Kaltenböck 2003).

(1c) He says that's no wonder, that the wedding had been postponed. (Google)
(1d) She may never match her full-brother Ollie Magern but there is no doubt PETITE MARGOT has a big race in her. (WB)
(1e) I've no doubt I'll see you at dinner soon (WB)

(2c) A: I knew the maternity hospital had closed. B: That's Fulford that's closed (WB)
(2d) Now you've got a fair sort of permanent staff now. There's Fred has been there for years. (WB)
(2e) A: you have got a member of staff working for each department? B: I've got John does the presses (WB)

The complementation constructions have matrix and complement clause as primary structural units. The matrix represents an emotional or cognitive state if a conscious participant is referred to, *to them* (1a), *I* (1e). An impersonal matrix (with *it/that/there*) may allow inferring an emotional or cognitive state, but it may also code modal (1d), mirative or evidential qualifications. On a lexical reading, the matrix is discourse primary, and the whole construction of the reporting or factive type. On a grammatical reading, the matrix is discourse secondary (Boye & Harder 2007, 2012).

Cleft constructions are elucidated as secondary specification constructions (Davidse & Kimps 2016). They construe a specificational act, in which the specification relation is 'secondary' in the same way as the predication relation in secondary predication (McGregor 1997). The postverbal complement specifies a value for a variable 'x' with the semantic role in

the SoA depicted by the cleft relative clause. This secondary specification relation obtains between the postverbal matrix complement and the cleft relative clause, the latter being dependent on both the controller and the matrix verb. In the examples with impersonal matrices (2a) and (2c), the cognitive agent involved in the specificational act remains 'off-stage' (Langacker 2002: 15), and can be inferred to be the actual speaker, as in (2c) and (2d), or a character serving as focalizer, as in (2a). In matrix types with personal pronouns, as in (2e), *I've got*, and with matrix verbs like *find* (2f), the cognitive agent is coded overtly. Matrices with subjects *it* (2a) and *that* (2c) trigger an exhaustiveness implicature for the specificational relation, which is absent in the examples with the other matrices.

(2f) After a few sham gardeners I found John who actually knows which plants will thrive. (Google)

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