

The Sentence in the Linguistic Theory

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Abstract

The definition of the sentence is considered one of the most controversial issues in linguistics . Many definitions of the sentence , some of which go back to the ancient Greek tradition , have been proposed . The purpose of the present study was to show how each of the major linguistic theories ; namely the traditional , structural , and generative theories approached the sentence . It was found that these theories share common views with regard to the notions that the sentence should be considered the largest unit of grammatical description and that it consists of two basic elements . It was also found that the theories differ , on the basis of their theorization , with regard to the nature of the sentence ; whether to consider it a physical or a psychological phenomenon .

FREYA STARK: PASSIONATE PILGRIM

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When a child Freya Stark was given a copy of *The Arabian Nights* as a gift by an aunt and that started a fascination with the east, especially in the Middle East, which was to last for a lifetime, until her death in 1993 at the age of one hundred.

She was born in Paris in 1893 and educated in London (at Bedford College and later at the School of Oriental Studies) and Italy, but most of her education was informal and she was mainly self-taught. She managed to learn seven languages, including Arabic, which was to be very useful for her during her travels in the Arab lands in the late twenties and thirties and was to be of paramount importance to her during the second world war as an intelligence officer, especially in Yemen, Egypt and Iraq.

Her adventures in the east began in 1927 when she visited Lebanon and, filled with a tremendous love of travel and curiosity about people and their customs and culture, she started a long journey that was to take her not only to Lebanon and

Syria but also Iraq, Iran, Arabia, Yemen, North Africa, Turkey and some European countries.¹

Although a child of privilege, her adventures were not like those of upper class youth who undertook the Grand Tour of continental Europe with the aim of completing their education. She lived a life of poverty for many years in Italy (where her mother had gone to live with an impoverished Italian count, leaving her husband behind). Italy was intensely attractive and interesting to her for its natural beauty and also for its rich cultural and historic heritage. but her real attraction lay further afield:

I had walked for hundreds of miles
along the Ventimiglia highroad and sat in
many dusty trains to learn Arabic.²

Her years of preparation and desire for the east ultimately drove her away from her mother, prevented her from joining her father (who owned a fruit farm and a timber cottage

¹For the purposes of this paper I shall confine myself to her experiences in Iraq.

² Freya Stark, *Beyond Euphrates* (London: John Murray, 1951), p. 2. All subsequent references to this book will appear parenthetically in the text. Henceforth *BE*.
business except [her] own to attend to, no anxiety, no decisions, no work except the learning of Arabic." (*BE*, p. 6)

in Canada and who frequently begged her to go to him), although she felt guilty about letting him down at a time when he was not well and was declining fast.

The frequent shortage of money, sometimes even the sheer absence of it, made her postpone her arrival in the Levant for several years, although she had prepared for that journey during many years. When at last enough cash had been collected, she embarked upon her journey in November 1927.

She had the necessary assets of a traveller: self-confidence, endurance (a trait she had been taught by her father), careful planning, moral bravery and a strong will power. She had "nobody's

This initial journey (to Brummana, Lebanon and also to Syria) made her realize that she was at a crossroads and that she had to take a decision about her future. Her decision, though unconsciously, had already been taken. Her "new road was found, and [her] feet already moving in its dust." (BE, p. 8).

Like a lot of people of her generation, Freya Stark had wanted to be a missionary (in 1926 and 1927) but this she considered unsuitable as she discovered that she hated philanthropy and disliked teaching. She preferred learning and the whole world opened in front of her for her to plunge into with great enthusiasm and eagerness and absorb avidly whatever she came across. The east, she discovered, had a lot to teach

her, the east with its moral superiority and guidance could lead western man to "see the good things, and constantly turn away from some European horror." (*BE*, p. 13) And she undertook the hard task of knowing the east, its mysteries, its hidden secrets, beauties and its spiritual powers merely for the pleasure of it:

No doubt that one of the purest most unadulterated of human joys is that of exercise.... Exercise, the attainment of knowledge, and the practice of affection: the three best in humanity—and beyond there a gift of the spirit, which is divine.

(*BE*, p. 59)

In October 1929 she made her first visit to Baghdad crossing the desert from Syria in a car in the company of three other passengers (who were pilgrims bound for Mecca) and an Armenian driver. Her experiences in Iraq during this trip and subsequent ones are considered amongst her most romantic. People considered her "wild by nature." (*BE*, p. 62) But she was not cowed by such an appellation: she believed that the chances of survival in a precarious and dangerous world are with wildness. Wildness alone is not brave, but there is a fearlessness in the minds of such people that make them instinctively ready to face the unexpected when it comes. An eccentric, perhaps, as a genuinely wild eccentric, she was not interested merely seeing

the world; but rather “exclusively interested in *being*.” (BE, p. 63)

For Freya Stark Baghdad was very different from the Mediterranean which knew very well. Here, for example, houses had flat roofs; there were large areas of wasteland separating cultivated land and urban and country places; dust was a constant phenomenon; in fact she calls Baghdad “a city of wicked dust.” (BE, p. 97) There was a great deal of dilapidation. But a clearly shocking thing that she saw in this new world was not so much the strange atmosphere, the unhygienic residential areas of mainly the poor of Baghdad, but rather the manners and the ways of the British Civil Servants in Iraq:

The Civil Service lived in a residential area, and thought it a poor sort of taste to enjoy anything outside.

(BE, p.84)

Even more shocking was the British official attitude towards women:

the English woman in Iraq was never thought of as in a street at all, but as a wife, mother or daughter attached to a man at a distance—in fact safely indoors. This double loss of individuality, inflicted on one half of the human race, came to me with a shock. . .

(Ibid.)

The husbands of these women also resented Stark's having any relation with their wives. They considered themselves

as anchors when stray currents threaten to sweep their wives away, and the business of an anchor is, after all, to become unresponsive and spiky whenever one pulls it.³

They treated her as a Disturber of the Peace and forbade their womenfolk to consort with her.

As shortage of cash was a regular problem with her, she could not afford to live in the respectable middle or upper class quarters of the city, nor could she afford to live in a high class hotel. The alternative suggested was the British Club. But here Arabs were not allowed to enter it, and it seemed to her most perverse to come all the way from England to learn Arabic, and yet be excluded from regular contact with the local people. In defiance of the British attitudes and customs, she rented a very small house (of two rooms) in a poor native district where the street was only six feet wide. The rent was 1s. 3d. a day—well within her financial reach. The house was surrounded by little

³ Freya Stark, *Baghdad Sketches* (London: John Murray, 1937), p. 71. All subsequent references to this book will appear parenthetically in the text. Henceforth *BS*.
and delightful." (*BS*, p. 24)

shops, a nebk tree and a mosque (from where she had to get her daily water). Her neighbours were simple curious people who "promise[d] [her] sympathy and assistance while [she] lived among them. They all seemed friendly

But of course this was not to the liking of the British community of the city, who considered her "a rebel, a dangerous eccentric, or a spy . . . a flouting of national prestige." (BE, p. 86)

In fact an embarrassment to the British as years before Gertrude Bell had been with her life and death in Baghdad.⁴ There was an important difference, though, between them: Gertrude Bell did not like people much; she hated most of all female Arabists but Freya Stark was a very warm, gentle and friendly person. Gertrude Bell would probably not have liked Freya Stark much had she known her, but Freya Stark always regretted not having known her.

Her warm appeal to the natives was probably because she did not feel herself superior to them, did not condescend to the people around her but was rather congenial: ". . . the nicest way to know people," she says, "is *not* to be important or wealthy and so come upon their genuine kindness." (BE, p. 97)

⁴ Gertrude Bell (1868-1926)—An intrepid traveller in the East for which she developed an early passion. Died in Baghdad, probably by suicide.

This is why she found access to the strangest places and was welcomed by the most forbidding people:

Initially ridiculed for her passionate fondness of the Middle East, her writings ultimately generated vast interest for that mysterious part of the world, where she was surprisingly embraced, made privy to political movements closed to most foreigners and even shown precious Islamic documents.⁵

Ostracized by the Civil Service, because she was "the first Englishwoman to have settled in a native house." (*BE*, p. 122) Freya Stark turned, with regret, away from her stock, keeping only some semblance of relationship with few English (or sometimes European) males who understood and sympathized with her:

What a relief to be with people so interested in ideas that they do not take you for an unnatural phenomenon whenever you express one. They⁶⁶ assured me that with one exception I am

⁵ Melissa Rossi, review of *Passionate Nomad: The Life of Freya Stark* by Jane Fletcher Geniesse in the *Amazon Com.*, 1999.

⁶⁶Two French archaeologists of Kish—M Watelin and M Martel.

the only woman in Baghdad with a soul of any sort.
(*BE*, p. 137)

Freya Stark was also appreciated by the young, educated men of Baghdad who visited her regularly and exchanged views with her about politics, culture and current affairs. She called them the "young effendi" and talking to them gave her immense joy and fulfillment. She understood and sympathized with them, tolerated their restive, uneasy and even antagonistic tendencies towards the British, but also at times criticized their rashness and lack of careful planning; their desire to destroy the old without actually knowing what to replace it with; their bad imitations of western models in building, creative writing, dress, etc.

It was she who drew their attention, and their allegiance not so much to the secondary schools of which they were passionate students or graduates which were, in their view, the cornerstones on which they were to build their new European nation, but rather the timeless, immortal and irreplaceable culture and civilization which Iraqis had pursued for its own sake through the ages. Thus it was that when visiting Nejf, for example, early in the thirties, she took pains in photographing not the impressive beauty of the secondary school there, but rather "a miserable weaver at a handloom in his shop." (*BS*, p. 260)

In a letter to her father dated 21 March, 1930, she spoke of her great appreciation of Arab tribe values, the pleasant family feeling of the tribe:

I feel I should like to belong to a tribe, something so big and comfortable, and if you do come to grief you do it all together: and there is none of the horrid petty bickering feeling of the towns.

(*BE*, p. 141)

The desert with its vastness and openness also gave her not so much a tremendous joy of privacy but a feeling of awe, of surprise, a sort of disbelief, a realization of "a real significance, a glorious exultation . . . that behind the horizon, and behind it again, and again, and again, for days, and days and days, lies the Desert of Arabia." (*BS*, p. 179)

The English were not liked in Iraq even at that time. They were seen as imperialists and frequent demonstrations were held to vent for Arab hatred of the British:

To be anti-British made you successful either as a lawyer, a politician or a journalist; you made an income, and you were a patriot as well, which is as near as one can get in politics to eating one's cake and having it: whereas if you were pro-British, you were slanged as a Betrayer by your own people, and treated as a Negligible Quantity by your foreign friends, who were too busy reconciling

their opponents to be able to waste much time on their supporters.

(*BS*, p. 43)

Freya Stark considered herself an imperialist too; she was not even pro-native.

What is peculiar is that we appear to be surprised at this state of affairs [at anti-British sentiments]. "How ungrateful," we say. "All these people educated by us, writing these horrid things about us," thinking that they can hold the hearts of people by material means alone. The Arab does not allow himself to be much influenced by the bribes he takes.

(*Ibid.*, p. 44)

But she certainly was less superior and more polite than most English people, and therefore she decided to carry on with her ordinary life, trying to improve her Arabic as much as she could and stay out of the tension and scrapes with the local people. But there was inside her a conflict between "respectability and the charms of independence." (*BE*, p. 145)

She certainly did not want to turn her back on her compatriots who even called her "mad" for daring to travel alone with one or two native guides. But if need be she would leave behind everything. Freya Stark could not stay put in a place for long; she was restless and wanted to move on, see new places, discover new archaeological sites, though she was not trained for that profession. But she learned to climb mountains

in Iraq, and in Persia and excavate with experts⁷ important historic sites such as Aden in Yemen and Luristan in Persia.

People could call her troublesome and she certainly had a tough life wrought with dangers and difficulties, but she was an optimist, always believing that something will turn up and solve her problems. And usually it did! Her moments of depression were few and far in between. Sometimes she felt old and incompetent, useless and lonely—a failure, with no charm or beauty or importance. Such a moment appears in a letter to her mother on 6 May, 1930:

Don't know why, but I am so very depressed this evening—feeling so old, and as if my whole life were wasted and now it were too late to do anything with it. To be just middle-aged with no particular charm or beauty and no position is a dreary business. In fact I feel as if I had been going uphill all the time to nowhere in particular. If only I could eventually find some work that would make me feel settled and interested; I hope it may be.

⁷ Dr. Gertrude Caton-Thompson and Elinor Gardner, a geologist began towards the end of 1937 the first ever systematic excavation in Aden.

But most of the time she was filled with a strong drive and enthusiasm to go ahead and achieve what she had come to the Near East to achieve. Later in that same letter she speaks proudly of what she had done already and is still doing: learning “enough Persian, Turkish, Kurdish and Arabic to get about, and I believe I would be the only Englishwoman in the Near East to do so: and then something amusing is bound to turn up.”

Something amusing usually did turn up. The fact that she was the first English, probably the first European, woman to have visited those strange, mysterious and exotic places filled her with self-satisfaction and justified pride. On the whole she was happy, even if ultimately she had solitude for companion and disapproving looks from “respectable people.”

Another letter to her mother, dated 6 August, 1931 refers to this status of hers:

. . . it is funny, but my wanderings seem to be a test of most people's social status and some always disapprove. Mrs. ——— told me that for *her* part she liked looking after husband and children (quite nicely): “I have neither one nor the other,” I explain humbly.

Not even her poverty and constant shortage of cash could diminish her stoic self-control and endurance of deprivation:

I have a fear this may be my last year in the East. I don't know what will happen. But it is no good to worry—and meanwhile I feel that these last three years have been thoroughly well spent: that is always a satisfaction.⁸

Freya Stark could not endure total commitment for any long period of time. This is why she held no permanent or steady job until 1932 when she was assigned as sub-editor on the *Baghdad Times*. It was an unusual kind of job as it required that she become part of a team, something she was not used to and was not properly trained for. Yet she enjoyed it tremendously because she felt she was contributing and in return was being made a welcome member of a family. A warm compensation this for the long years of solitude she had experienced as a child and teenager of a broken family.

For the first time also her work prevented her from constant travelling—usually short trips either in Iraq or neighbouring countries. Travelling was a great joy to her as she was able to leave behind her past and move forward to receive the new.

⁸ Letter to Venetia Buddicom, a friend and fellow traveller in Syria and Palestine, dated 4 Dec., 1936.

But the prospect of £20 a month with the possibility of it rising to £30 was too enticing for her to refuse. In a letter to Herbert Young dated 19 January, 1932, she writes:

I have had an offer of £20 a month and possibly £30 later to work here for the newspaper. But I do dislike the thought of being tied to a job. I am going to think it over for a little and perhaps see if they will have me just for a few months' experiment.. I find it's hard work to write to order and am not at all good at rapid modern journalism.

However, she took the job and stayed at it for over a year—a rare feat for her, although she did sometimes escape for a few days to breathe an air of freedom or engage in a new adventure.

Her greatest adventure during this year was the beginning of a series of sketches for the *Baghdad Times* about various aspects of life in Baghdad. This was to be the beginning of a lifelong dedication to writing about her travels and the amazing and amusing places and people she had seen. These articles were eventually collected and published in 1937 under the title of *Baghdad Sketches*. She wrote about thirty books which today are considered among the best travel books written in the English language. Her style is very engaging, warm, funny, witty and precise. She has a keen eye for detail, a

penetrating depth and a direct appeal which fascinate the reader and charm him. The eastern mysticism that under the pens of so many writers would be offered to the common reader in all its bewildering, even confusing spiritual aura, turns in the hands of Freya Stark to a clear truth, an enchanting spell, a magical delight. Western rationalism has come here for baptism and we are privy to that ritual in the most easy-flowing, beautiful wording possible.

Of the many books she wrote mention can be made of *The Valleys of the Assassins* (1934), *A Winter in Arabia* (1940), *East Is West* (1945), *Beyond Euphrates* (1951), *The Zodiac Arch* (1968), etc. She also has four volumes of letters.

For her travels and writings about them Freya Stark was awarded in 1933 the Back Grant for her travels in Luristan, Persia. At the age of eighty two she was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II. Lawrence of Arabia called her "a gallant creature." She was made to speak on the B.B.C., gave interviews to the British Press, was regularly photographed and gave lectures to the Royal Central Asian Society, and in 1934 to the Royal Asiatic Society on which occasion she received the Burton medal—the first woman to do so. She became the darling of the British society after years of antagonism, ridicule, or at best, neglect. Her books and the invaluable photographs accompanying them gave the readers a priceless opportunity to view the Middle East specially with sympathy and

understanding rarely provided by other travel books. And this before the Middle East became the focus of attention by western powers for its huge oil wealth.

Freya Stark never married, although she longed for a proper home and family and love especially early in her life, the normal security that marriage usually brought for a woman of her generation. But she never found the right man, although there were liaisons with and attractions to several men, but none of them had the same fervent love for adventure, for seeing new places, discovering or learning new things. Some of these men were married or indifferent to her or just not quite *the* man she longed to unite herself to for life. It is believed also that so many young men of her generation were slaughtered in the first world war that there was a great shortage of eligible bachelors to choose from:

I used to feel that I had missed the real reason of life by not marrying. . . . But now I feel this is not so. I think the human being is just coming to that point where sex is no longer the only means of progress, as it has been so far: we are just stepping into a wider world and need not feel lonely, except in the way that pioneers are lonely. Life is easier for married people: but I think it ought to be if anything richer for us, so long as we take it with full hands and not with the inferiority sense which has often ruined the lives of spinsters.

(BE, p. 259)

Marriage would not have given all this opportunity or time to live her life so fully, deeply or completely, it would have confined her to a certain place, certain habits and a certain social surrounding. Freya Stark's ambitions and daring character would have been extremely miserable and shattered. This indomitable soul sat with bedouin sheikhs in their camel hair tents and talked to them about the future of their tribes or their countries; donned a veil on her face and marched into the holiest shrines of Islam in Kadhimain, Nefj and Kerbala without the least sense of fear or hesitation; dared the forbidding mountain peaks of northern Iraq or Persia discovering lost cities and civilizations:

I see people all the time brooding over their *past* mistakes, and then doing them all over again in the present, just because their thoughts are not turned forward.

I regret so much in my youth—so much time wasted, and health unnecessarily wasted. But there is always time to conquer one's universe; it is only the matter of seconds, a matter of seeing, after all.

(BE, p. 263)

Most men saw her as an intelligent, entertaining friend, a strong woman they could trust, learn from and turn to for

advice and sympathy. She was willing for a time to go along with this role, her "firm courageous mind on which [they could] lean," (*BE*, p. 273) but she soon tired of "being treated like a pillar for leaning against," (*Ibid.*) and wanted to be treated as a knowledgeable, brave woman equal to, if not better than, men around her. She was no goddess of love or beauty, she knew that (Freya being the name of the Scandinavian goddess of beauty and love of the night), but she knew her worth and resented being just a shoulder for others to cry upon.

She did not care much about profit either. True she needed money to survive but financial gain was in no way part of her ambition in life and did not form part of the general planning or writing of her books. She wrote them, she said, for "their own sakes," (*BE*, p. 295) nor did she write them to the order of her reading public. She wrote for her own pleasure and resented suggestions from this or that: "I think of the Public, she said, "as a friend, who may like me for myself alone." (*Ibid.*)

She left Iraq in 1933 but she was to return again during the years of the second world war—this time on a mission for the British government.

Her extraordinary empathy for the peoples of the Middle East, her vast knowledge of the area and her mastery of the main languages of the various lands, made her perfect for the task of holding the allegiance of these people to the Allied camp during the critical years of the 1939-45 war where restive young