Some attention has recently been bestowed by grammarians on the use of prepositions in modern English. S. Brorström dealt with The Increasing Frequency of the Preposition 'about' (as against 'of') during the modern English period, with special reference to the verbs say, tell, talk and speak (Stockholm, 1963), and before this monograph appeared, J. Söderlind had treated some aspects of the preposition over in an interesting article in English Studies 41, 297—305 (1960). Exploring the use of this preposition from various angles, he complained that the Oxford English Dictionary 'sadly disappoints us as far as the modern usage is concerned; nor are other dictionaries very helpful'. Out of the large sphere of modern prepositional use we are going to select a few items of special interest.

1. MULTIPLE PREPOSITIONAL USE

A. In connection with verbs

1. to belong

With eight prepositions (apart from zero usage), the verb to belong probably stands at the head of this group. According to Horwill, 'in England, when to belong is followed by a preposition, that preposition is invariably to'. This is confirmed by Foster: 'In British the preposition used with this verb is traditionally to.' (355). This is also in agreement with the dictum of O.E.D. (1887), which noted incidentally an older construction with an indirect object, used e.g. by Addison: what belonged them (Tatler 100). In passing, O.E.D mentions the American use of with, giving a quotation out of Elsie Venner (1961): you belong with the last (sc. set). O.E.D., Supplement added a further example: you belonged with each other (1924), calling this usage 'originally U.S.' Krüger quoted from J. R. Lowell: Thoreau belongs with Donne and Browne and Novalis. Horwill’s two examples are: cheese belongs with salad; he belongs for me with George Eliot. I found with used for instance by the Encyclopedia Britannica (1911) in the article on American Literature (I.841c) and in Bronson.

Apart from with, the preposition in is mentioned by O.E.D. as occurring in America, no example being given. Horwill has the following American examples: both books... belong in the notable group of English impressions which includes...; the elaborate treatises... belong in the study (Henry S. Canby); this letter belongs in the archives of New England. My own examples are: these things belong in a different classification;... in the same group, etc. (Saturday Review, 1927. 487, 515). According to Foster the preposition in is today being used in Great Britain as well. He says: 'to belong to
is now having to face competition from the American form to belong in'. He gives an example from Observer: he belongs in the second category (355). I found this statement confirmed: Lawrence belongs in the great central tradition of the English novel (TLC⁰). The preposition among is listed with two examples as American by Horwill¹: he belongs among those who habitually read book advertisements; it belongs among the small number of American medical schools to which great praise is due (Dr. A. Flexner). I also found it used for instance in NYT⁷: (it) belongs among... (11 April 1926, p. 8), and elsewhere: he belongs among the radicals (evidence lost). Cf.: do you think you belong among us? (Hemingway, Sun⁸ 157); it belongs among the experimental comedies (Spencer⁹ 234).

Apart from the three prepositions (among, in, with) mentioned by Horwill,¹ there are four additional ones used in American texts — around, at, on, under: he looks as though he belonged around a race track (Hemingway, Death¹⁰ 260); Cummings does not belong at the Provincetown... but O'Neill indubitably belongs at the Provincetown, at the Guild, in the suburbs of London (Zabel¹¹ 521); the story belongs on a low plane of literature (NYT, 16 May 1926, p. 8); (they) belong on its fringe (Lapsley¹² 208); the theories of Science generally belong under the second head (O.E.D., Supplement).

Zero prepositional use is also to be found in American English in connection with to belong. This is somewhat loosely defined by O.E.D., Supplement as meaning 'to be related or connected; to have a certain connexion indicated or implied in the context'. Foster's² explanation is much more to the point: 'being in one's true environment, belonging to one's rightful group' (354). The hero of O'Neill's play The Hairy Ape repeatedly exclaims for instance: I belong! Cf.: Yuh wanter blow tings up, don't yuh? Well, dat's me! I belong!...; so dem boids don't tink I belong, neider (Scene Seven). Again, this American use can be found spreading in Britain, according to Foster, who gives the following example: Westminster gave him... the feeling of belonging (Spectator, 14 Jan. 1955).

To belong can also be used with an infinitive construction in American English: why do I belong to do that? = why do I have to do that? cf.: do you belong to get up so early? I belong to go to town, etc. I found this construction often used for instance by McCullers¹³: we belong to be together (413), etc.

2. to centre

According to Wood¹⁴ and others, such as Haber¹⁵ and Perrin¹⁶, this verb must be construed with the prepositions on and upon only (used for instance by Bacon 1622). The handbooks mentioned seem to rely on O.E.D., Supplement, which is castigating the 'wrong' use of about, around and round. They are admitted to be 'now very frequent', but are denounced as 'illogical phrases'.

As to about, one American example is listed already by O.E.D., the real interest of the story centres about the lives of four personages (Harper's Mag. 1878). I can add another example: he felt that he had to make his novels center about aristocrats (Blankenship¹⁷ 236). O.E.D. also gives one example of around: it is around the king... that the main storm of battle is made to centre (Freeman 1868). O.E.D., Supplement has another:... around whom centred her most precious memoirs (1870).

Examples with round are to all appearances British ones. O.E.D. has five examples (1886—1929), including one from Kipling. The latest example is taken out of TLS⁹: the group of gifted men and women who centred round Henry Adams (1929).

Constructions with in are adduced by O.E.D. (sub 2) from 1691 onwards. One
modern American example is to be found in Blankenship\textsuperscript{17}: \textit{the whole creation centered in man, in each individual} (70). As to this \textit{in}, cf. also section B.

3. \textit{to thrill}

According to O.E.D. this verb is often construed with the prepositions \textit{at} and \textit{with}: \textit{doth not thy blood thrill at it} (Shakespeare); \textit{England was thrilling with excitement at the thought...} (1874); \textit{she thrilled with understanding of the words} (Bell\textsuperscript{18} 37).

To \textit{thril} is also used with the preposition \textit{over} (Saturday Review,\textsuperscript{5} 1929. 857). The preposition \textit{to} seems today to be most frequently used in American texts: \textit{(he) thrilled to the M. M. flags} (S. Lewis, \textit{It Can't Happen Here}\textsuperscript{19} 188); \textit{(he thought) every one would thrill to his tale of imprisonment, torture and escape} (ib. 399); when the audience thrilled to his wondering cry, \textit{“O, she's warm”} (Spencer\textsuperscript{9} 367); generations of European children have thrilled to the novels of J. F. Cooper (Pyles, \textit{Words and Ways}\textsuperscript{20} 34); \textit{he thrilled to the promise of the age of canals} (Spiller\textsuperscript{21} 168); \textit{we learned to thrill to heroic deeds} (Mayer\textsuperscript{22}) etc.

B. In connection with adjectives

As an example of multiple prepositional use in connection with adjectives I select \textit{sick ‘having a desire to vomit’}.

\textit{Sick at the stomach} is evidenced by \textit{DAE},\textsuperscript{23} 1653, 1872 and 1918. In his doctoral thesis on the syntax of Hemingway (Jena, 1956), G. Gräf found three examples with \textit{at}: \textit{(he) stood there feeling sick at the stomach} (\textit{Men Without Women}\textsuperscript{24}), etc. According to Kurath\textsuperscript{25} \textit{at the stomach} is usual in all of the South and the Midland and is not uncommon in Greater New York City, Connecticut, and Rhode Island.—\textit{Sick in the stomach} is, according to Kurath, current in two separate areas: 1. southeastern Pennsylvania, including Philadelphia, and 2. the tidewater area.—\textit{Sick on the stomach} is, according to him, also current in two detached areas: 1. the Pennsylvania German settlement area of Eastern Pennsylvania and the Shenandoah Valley, 2. the Pennsylvania German settlements on the Yadkin in North Carolina, and from there all the way down to the coast.—\textit{Sick to the stomach} is, according to Kurath, to be found predominantly in the New England settlement area. There is an American example in \textit{DAE} (1830) sub \textit{sick}. Cf. also: \textit{he felt sick to his stomach} (Hemingway, \textit{To Have}\textsuperscript{26}). \textit{DAE} uses it when elucidating to \textit{spleen, ‘to feel angry or sick to one’s stomach’}. Cf. also preposition \textit{to} further down.

II. TYPICAL AMERICAN USE OF CERTAIN PREPOSITIONS

1. the preposition \textit{to}

a) chiefly used locally

John Pickering had already castigated the American use of \textit{to} (\textit{A Vocabulary}\textsuperscript{27}), which we found above in \textit{sick to the stomach}, instead of \textit{at} or \textit{in}, as expressions ‘very common with the illiterate’: \textit{he lives to York; he is to his store}, etc. J. R. Bartlett called this use ‘an exceedingly common vulgarism in the Northern States’ (\textit{A Glossary}\textsuperscript{28}). One of his examples, \textit{men were to work}, corresponds to the modern some 450,000 miners were back to work today (\textit{NYHT}\textsuperscript{29} 6 Dec. 1948, p. 1). O.E.D. also lists as ‘modern American’: \textit{you can get real handsome cups and saucers to Crosby’s},
and Mayer has the entry: I got it to Perkin’s. Cf.: he is frequently late to class (NYHT, 31 July 1948, p. 4) and O’Neill: his second year to college (Strange Interlude I); this was corrected by Kemp Malone: in college in his article in ASp., Oct. 1930, p. 26; my father had wanted me to start to college in September (Perspectives 5, p. 136); since they started to school together (Caldwell); opening a copy of 1576 to page 11, we find… (Hotson) 127). This last example shows that we can no longer call this use ‘illiterate’ or ‘vulgar’. It is today standard American colloquial usage. Very often is found after local adverbs such as down, out, over, up: he said he had business down to New York (Metalious); he took French over to the high school (ib.), etc.

It is also much used in phrases like the following: he was a middle-aged man with a bald top to his head (Hemingway, Farewell 33 316); there was a fishy flavor to the milk (Melville, Moby Dick Ch. 15); there was a real beauty to living (Mitchell); there’s a catch to it (Jacobs), etc. Especially frequent is the phrase: that’s all there is to it (often used by M. Twain); some of these old American words do have a kind of bully swing to them (M. Twain; cf. my Hauptverben § 390), etc.

The use of preposition to after a form of the verb to be in the past tense is confined to American usage. Sentences such as: were you to the concert last night? I was to town this morning are called ‘dialectal’ by Krapp, who holds conservative views. We find for instance in M. Twain: he said he was down to town (Huckleberry Finn 52). But Krapp recognizes this construction in the perfect and pluperfect tenses as ‘idiomatically used’: have you ever been to Chicago? we had been to a concert, etc. He says: ‘it strictly should be: have you ever been in Chicago? we had been at a concert’ (72) but adds: ‘the idiom is too firmly established at least in colloquial speech to be questioned’. That this idiom is also established in England is confirmed by O.E.D., which (sub be B 6) comments: ‘“modern”: have you been to the Crystal Palace?’ The construction was, however, already used by Dickens: I never found that any young lady had ever been to school there (Copperfield; cf. my Hauptverben § 62). But we find examples of this typically American use of to even in the cases mentioned above in British texts of today: he has been to great trouble to find out more about (his) personal life (TLS, 13 Aug. 1964, p. 729).

b) used with respect to time

You had come to time (Twain, Huckleberry Finn 12) ‘punctually’; what dress should she wear to the barbecue? (Mitchell 74); it has to this day an appeal that his more placid verses lack (Baugh 1102); to this day the book is widely read (Schlauch 183), etc. That this construction occurs in British texts, too, is attested by Poutsma (A Grammar of Late Modern English II 2, p. 276) and by O.E.D. sub to (example from Wordsworth); to date, food aid has fallen short of its promise (Reader’s Digest, Aug. 1966, p. 70).

c) to used in connection with verbs and adjectives

They admitted to inconsistency; we are being alerted to this development; they beat us to it; to cater to this type of clientele; to confess to germ warfare; to own up to...; he was agreeable to talks (NYHT, 26 March 1953, p. 2); oblivious to her tears, etc.

This construction with to is occasionally met with in modern British texts: I found... that the resulting interpretation was identical to the one I had reached before (Muir).
2. use of the preposition in

In American English in has sometimes retained the force of on. We find this for instance in the case of to center (see above). Further examples: rules are based in reason (Baugh 843); every state is founded in conquest (Analysis, August 1950, p. 3); to inculcate in the people a stern sense of duty and responsibility (Blankenship 6). This construction is considered ‘obsolete’ by O.E.D.

The preposition in is in America also used instead of with, as in the older language: they were intensely disappointed in the Garbo film (Hemingway): a usage to be found in Fielding. Further example: disappointed in her look (Saturday Review, 1927, p. 526).

3. the preposition past

The use of this preposition after a (generally negative) form of to put is a typical American construction. EDD has a few Scottish and Irish examples (sub put). O.E.D., Supplement has two additional ones (sub. prep. past), dated 1916 and 1921, and comments: ‘to think (a person) quite capable of doing something’. American examples: I wouldn’t put it past him (W. Saroyan, Little Children); I wouldn’t put it past him nor anything else (O’Neill, Ah Wilderness!). It was used by Galsworthy in Over the River (see my Hauptverben 527). There is an (exclusively Southern?) American variant not listed anywhere so far by any dictionary or grammarian with the preposition beyond, repeatedly used by Mitchell (cf. my Hauptverben § 446 and p. 510).

4. the preposition outside of

DAE lists to be outside of (something) = to have (something) in the stomach as a result of having eaten it, giving a quotation from G. O. Shields: Big Game (1890): my wife said she knew, from (the raccoon’s) full stomach and his sneaking look, that he was outside of her pet turkey. DAE adds a quotation from Farmer (1889): ‘to get outside a thing is to understand it, or to use an expression very common in the West Indies, to get to the windward of it.’ DAE adds another example: directly he got outside of a few glasses of whisky, his manner was very different (1886). Cf.: get outside of a nice long cocktail and you’ll have a new light on things (Lewis, Arrowsmith).

N O T E S

* Professor Gustav Kirchner died in Jena on December 6th, 1966. There are a few cases in the present article in which references indicating the exact places of occurrence of the adduced examples could not be supplied by the author. These omissions, however, are of so little significance as not to invalidate his contribution in any way. For a tribute to Professor Kirchner, see p. 10 of the present volume. -Eds.

4. W. C. Bronson, Short History of American Literature (Boston, 1900).
6. TLS = Times Literary Supplement.
Několik poznámek o užívání předložek v moderní, zvláště americké angličtině

Článek probírá některá předložková spojení, která nejsou zachycena v odborné literatuře. Uvádí předložky, kterých se užívá se slovesy to belong, to centre, to thrill a s přídavným jménem sick. Dále se zabývá využitím předložek to, in, past a outside of.