

skrit use of an accusative with the verb "to be," shows us how artificial are our distinctions between transitive and intransitive verbs. The adverbial sense of the accusative comes out plainly in the Homeric ἀκὴν ἔσαν, and is one more proof of the fact that the accusative, like the genitive, must be classed along with the adjective and the adverb as a qualifying word that defines and limits the words to which it is attached. Custom and grammatical development have alone determined how such qualifying words should be severally used.

The languages of our family of speech are in fair agreement as to the employment of the accusative and the genitive; there are other syntactical contrivances, however, where such an agreement is not to be found. The "ablative absolute" of Latin, for instance, is replaced by a genitive absolute in Greek, by a dative in Lithuanian, by a locative, sometimes also a genitive, and very rarely an ablative, in Sanskrit. In old English we have apparently a dative (as in Anglo-Saxon), as when Wycliffe writes, "they have stolen him, us sleping," whereas, as Mr. Peile observes,¹ we should now say, "we sleeping," using the nominative as occasionally in Greek. As a matter of fact, this so-called "casus absolutus," this case "freed" from all government, and standing outside the sentence to the perpetual astonishment of the grammarians, is really a qualificatory word, dependent like the adverb upon the verb, and denoting the circumstances, or instrument, or mode of an action. Instead of the construction used by Wycliffe, we might just as well have had, "they have stolen him during our sleep."

¹ "Primer of Philology" (1877), p. 112.