Subjacency Revised (based on Chomsky 1986 and Lasnik&Saito 1992)

The original version of Subjacency (Chomsky 1973) said that **a step of movement can 'cross' at most one 'bounding node'** (not a term Chomsky used, though one that become standard). In that paper, **the bounding nodes were (what we now call) NP and CP**. This had the **defect** of not accounting for the fact that subjects are islands and the fact that embedded questions are islands. Extraction out of a subject crosses that subject, an NP, but crosses no CP. <I mark the crossed bounding nodes in red.>

(1) * [$_{CP}$ Who [$_{\bar{C}}$ did [$_{IP}$ [$_{NP}$ pictures of *t*] [$_{VP}$ fall on the floor]]]]

(2) * [$_{CP}$ What$_i$ [$_{\bar{C}}$ do [$_{IP}$ you [$_{VP}$ wonder [$_{CP}$ where$_j$ [$_{IP}$ Mary [$_{VP}$ put t_i t_j]]]]]]]

The original proposal (NP and CP) thus needed extra devices for examples like these. But the proposal had the **virtue** of allowing extraction out of an **object** NP:

(3) ✓[$_{CP}$ Who [$_{\bar{C}}$ did [$_{IP}$ you [$_{VP}$ see [$_{NP}$ pictures of *t*]]]]]

In part to provide an account of (1) and (2), Chomsky suggested that the bounding nodes are NP and **IP**. Now (1) and (2) become (1') and (2'):

(1') * [$_{CP}$ Who [$_{\bar{C}}$ did [$_{IP}$ [$_{NP}$ pictures of *t*] [$_{VP}$ fall on the floor]]]]

(2') * [$_{CP}$ What$_i$ [$_{\bar{C}}$ do [$_{IP}$ you [$_{VP}$ wonder [$_{CP}$ where$_j$ [$_{IP}$ Mary [$_{VP}$ put t_i t_j]]]]]]]

Standard short or long WH-movement will still be fine, as no step crosses more than one IP:

(4) ✓[$_{CP}$ Who$_i$ [$_{\bar{C}}$ did [$_{IP}$ you [$_{VP}$ see t_i]]]]

(5) ✓ [$_{CP}$ What$_i$ [$_{\bar{C}}$ do [$_{IP}$ you [$_{VP}$ think [$_{CP}$ t_i' [$_{\bar{C}}$ that [$_{IP}$ Mary [$_{VP}$ bought t_i]]]]]]]

Great! Except now we incorrectly rule out (3):

(3') [$_{CP}$ Who [$_{\bar{C}}$ did [$_{IP}$ you [$_{VP}$ see [$_{NP}$ pictures of *t*]]]]]

ECM and raising complements are also apparently problematic, since WH can move out of them, but two IPs are crossed (with no Spec of CP as an intermediate stepping stone)

(6) $[_{CP}$ Who$_i$ $[_{\bar{C}}$ did $[_{IP}$ you $[_{VP}$ believe $[_{IP}$ t_i to be intelligent]]]]]

(7) $[_{CP}$ Who$_i$ $[_{\bar{C}}$ does $[_{IP}$ Mary$_j$ $[_{VP}$ seem $[_{IP}$ t_j to $[_{VP}$ like t_i]]]]]]

So Chomsky (1976) tried various ways of letting these good sentences back in, but none were really satisfactory.

To address the baffling asymmetry between extraction out of subject and extraction out of object, and to try to develop a principled theory of bounding nodes rather than just a list, Chomsky (1986) presented a completely new approach to Subjacency. It would take several weeks (which we don't have) to explore the complicated technology Chomsky develops in that book. (It is summarized in the web site link labeled "Excerpt from Move Alpha".) I will here hint at a simplified version, revised from Lasnik and Saito (1992), which was itself a revision of Chomsky (1986).

Chomsky (1986) uses the term 'barrier' for bounding node. I will adopt that here, but to avoid confusion with barriers for government, I will use a Chomskian notational ploy and coin the term 'BARRIER'. Here is the core idea (adopting an L&S revision):

(8) All XPs except VP are potential BARRIERS.
(9) As before, a step of movement can't cross more than one BARRIER.
(10) An XP gets deBARRIERized if it is a complement to a lexical head, V, N, A, P. (Chomsky called this 'L-marking'.)

Under this theory, object is deBARRIERized, since object is L-marked by the verb. Subject is NOT deBARRIERized, as it is not L-marked. IP is (usually) not L-marked, as it is (usually) the complement of C, which is not a *lexical* head. <The qualification if for ECM and raising complements, which **are** complements of lexical heads, V or A.> I'll repeat the problematic grammatical examples, with, as before, the BARRIERs marked in red. As you can see, no step of movement crosses more than one BARRIER.

(11) $[_{CP}$ Who $[_{\bar{C}}$ did $[_{IP}$ you $[_{VP}$ see $[_{NP}$ pictures of t]]]]]

(12) $[_{CP}$ Who$_i$ $[_{\bar{C}}$ did $[_{IP}$ you $[_{VP}$ believe $[_{IP}$ t_i to be intelligent]]]]]

(13) $[_{CP}$ Who$_i$ $[_{\bar{C}}$ does $[_{IP}$ Mary$_j$ $[_{VP}$ seem $[_{IP}$ t_j to $[_{VP}$ like t_i]]]]]]

Extraction out of a subject or an embedded question is still correctly ruled out, exactly as they were in Chomsky (1976), since in the relevant examples, the NP and IP are not complements of lexical heads. The former isn't a complement at all, and the latter is complement of C.

(14) * [$_{CP}$ Who [$_{\bar{C}}$ did [$_{IP}$ [$_{NP}$ pictures of *t*] [$_{VP}$ fall on the floor]]]]

(15) * [$_{CP}$ What$_i$ [$_{\bar{C}}$ do [$_{IP}$ you [$_{VP}$ wonder [$_{CP}$ where$_j$ [$_{IP}$ Mary [$_{VP}$ put t_i t_j]]]]]]]

As discussed by Huang and by Chomsky, the fact that 'adjuncts' (including PP modifiers, adverbial modifiers, and relative clauses) are also 'islands'follows, since none are complements of lexical heads.

(16) * [$_{CP}$ [What class$_i$ [$_{\bar{C}}$ did [$_{IP}$ you [$_{VP}$ [$_{VP}$ read a book] [$_{PP}$ during t_i]]]]]] <PP is an adjunct>

(17) ✓[$_{CP}$ [What class$_i$ [$_{C}$ did [$_{IP}$ you [$_{VP}$ [$_{VP}$ hear [$_{PP}$ about t_i]]]]]] <PP is complement of V>

(18) *[$_{CP}$ What$_2$ [$_{C}$ did [$_{IP}$ you see [$_{NP}$ a [$_{N}$ child] [$_{CP}$ who$_1$ [$_{IP}$ John gave t_1 to t_2]]]]]