

*that that* vs. *that which* - 7/11/07

1. Weseen 1942:272 says *that that* is “rather common in speech” – but in writing *that which* is usually preferred”

Weseen, Maurice H. 1942. *Words confused and misused*. 3rd ed. London: Pitman.

2. Fowler & Fowler 1908 (2nd ed.), section on *that* and *who* or *which*:

Euphony demands that ‘that that’ should become ‘that which’, even when the words are separated; and many writers, from a feeling that ‘which’ is the natural correlative of the demonstrative ‘that’, prefer the plural ‘those which’; but the first example quoted in (2) seems to show that ‘those ... that’ can be quite unobjectionable.

[In those highly impressionable years that lie between six and ten...—*Spectator*.]

3. Garner’s MAU:

784: **that which**. When this stiff-sounding noun phrase can be replaced by *what*, it generally should be...

784f.: When *that* becomes, in plural, *those*, the second word in this construction may be either *which* or *that*. But *that* is better because the relative pronoun is restrictive...

785: We use *which that* in the singular because *that that* is intolerably awkward, but in the plural *those that* isn’t awkward at all.

4. extraneous *that that*:

4.1. item 1 introduces a complement clause; item 2 is a demonstrative beginning the subject of that clause (“that that nation shall not perish...” – A. Lincoln)

4.2. item 1 is a demonstrative, object of a preceding P; item 2 is a relativizer, introducing a relative clause modifying a nominal preceding the PP

Right now we have a pretty good solution for that that we’ve spent years building and I don’t see the model for that changing overnight.

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