Context. The Agree operation (Chomsky 2000, 2001) plays a central role in Minimalist syntax, but there is no consensus regarding exactly how Agree works and how much it can do. We focus here on one proposed extension of the Agree operation: MULTIPLE AGREE (Hiraiwa 2001; van Koppen 2005), in which a single probe acquires features simultaneously from more than one goal. Since Multiple Agree makes the theory of Agree less restrictive, it should be included in the theory only if empirically necessary. One empirical domain that, on its face, seems to provide support for Multiple Agree is PORTMANTEAU AGREEMENT, in which a single agreement marker indexes features of two arguments. Syntactic analyses in which at least some instances of portmanteau agreement reflect Multiple Agree have been proposed (Georgi 2013; Woolford 2016), but there are also proposals that portmanteau agreement is always a purely morphological phenomenon. The leading morphological analysis takes portmanteau agreement to reflect CONTEXTUAL ALLOMORPHY (Trommer 2010; Fenger 2018), in which the realization of one agreement head is conditioned by the features of another agreement head. Since each head enters a syntactic Agree relation with only one nominal, the contextual allomorphy analysis eliminates portmanteau agreement as a body of evidence for Multiple Agree.

Proposal. We present data from the “Conjunct Order” inflectional paradigm of the Algonquian language Kickapoo (Voorhis 1967, 1974), which shows a robust pattern of portmanteau agreement. The Kickapoo facts are important because they contradict several generalizations from previous theoretical work: (i) that portmanteau agreement occurs only when both arguments are SAPs (Georgi 2013); (ii) that syntactic portmanteau agreement arising from Multiple Agree is possible only in ergative languages (Woolford 2016); and (iii) that portmanteau agreement always appears on the lower of two agreement heads (Fenger 2018). None of these statements are correct for Kickapoo. We argue that the Kickapoo facts are consistent only with a syntactic Multiple Agree analysis of portmanteau agreement in which a single probe on Infl agrees with both arguments. We show that across a range of data, a Multiple Agree analysis makes the right predictions about the patterning of Kickapoo portmanteau agreement while a contextual allomorphy analysis is either inelegant or impossible. We conclude that while portmanteau agreement may indeed reflect contextual allomorphy in many languages, there are also languages, such as Kickapoo, in which portmanteau agreement is a phenomenon of the syntax and thus does lend support to the existence of Multiple Agree.

Background: Kickapoo agreement. In the Conjunct Order inflection of Kickapoo, exemplified in (1), a transitive verb is followed by two agreement suffixes, which we analyze as Voice and Infl (Bruening 2001; Hamilton 2013; Oxford 2018), plus a clause-type marker, here -i-e ‘INDICATIVE’, which we analyze as C. Voice always indexes the person of the object; Infl indexes either the subject (1a), the object (1b), or both arguments (1c). The realization of Infl in (1c) is an instance of portmanteau agreement: the portmanteau suffix -ament ‘3»1ඉඅ’ differs from the simple suffixes -k ‘3’ in (1a) and -aːk ‘1ඉඅ’ in (1b).

(1) Examples of Kickapoo Conjunct Order inflection (template: Stem–Voice–Infl–C)
   a. waːpam -eh -k -i  b. waːpam -i -aːk -e  c. waːpam -i -ament -i
   see -2OBJ -3 -IND see -1OBJ -1PL -IND see -1OBJ -3»1PL -IND
   ‘she sees you.sg’ ‘you see us’ ‘she sees us’

Syntactic and morphological analyses of -ament ‘3»1PL’ are both conceivable. Under either analysis, Voice must first agree with the object, given the systematic realization of Voice as object agreement; we take the 1PL object to receive [ACC] case as a result. The analyses differ in regard to what happens next, on Infl:

(2) a. Syntactic analysis: Infl agrees with both arguments; -ament ‘3»1PL’ is a true portmanteau that discharges features of both arguments on Infl (-ament ↔ [3], [1PL,ACC]).
   b. Morphological analysis: Infl agrees only with the subject; -ament ‘3»1PL’ is an allomorph of 3rd-person subject agreement that realizes Infl when Voice has [1PL] (-ament ↔ [3] / Voice[1PL]).

We present a series of arguments that (2a) is the correct analysis of Kickapoo portmanteau agreement, contra Trommer’s (2010) and Fenger’s (2018) proposals that only (2b) is available in human language.
1. Portmanteaux on higher head. Bobaljik (2000) argues that allomorphy conditioned by morphosyntactic features must be outward-sensitive: the realization of a lower head can be conditioned by features of a higher head but not vice versa. Fenger (2018) claims that portmanteau agreement always shows this pattern, appearing only on the lower of two agreement heads. In Kickapoo, however, it is instead the higher agreement head, Infl, that has portmanteau realizations. A contextual allomorphy analysis is still possible, but only if we allow inward-sensitive allomorphy for morphosyntactic features, which Bobaljik (2000) and others have argued to be undesirable. If we assume Multiple Agree on Infl, the issue does not arise.

2. Distribution of portmanteaux. Fenger (2018) points out that languages often have portmanteau agreement morphemes only for a random subset of the logically possible subject-object combinations, a fact that favors a shallow morphological analysis in which the distribution of contextual allomorphy is an accident of diachrony. In Kickapoo, however, the distribution of portmanteaux is not entirely random: there are no portmanteau agreement morphemes for combinations of two third-person arguments in Kickapoo or any other Algonquian language. This is a systematic gap, not an accidental one, and thus cannot be explained as a morphological accident. A syntactic analysis can explain the gap: 3-on-3 portmanteaux are systematically absent because Multiple Agree does not apply in 3-on-3 forms, a result that obtains because the “obviative” marking that appears on one of the third persons makes it a less accessible goal (Oxford 2018).

3. Portmanteaux with ambiguous subject. The portmanteau Infl suffix -aːkw appears in three contexts, all involving a 2PL object: 3»2PL, INAN»2PL, IMPER5»2PL. Under a Multiple Agree analysis in which Infl agrees with both arguments, -aːkw can be analyzed as discharging the features that Infl gained from the object: -aːkw ↔ [2PL.ACC]. Under a contextual allomorphy analysis in which Infl agrees only with the subject, -aːkw would instead have to be analyzed as an allomorph of subject agreement that is conditioned by 2PL features on Voice. But since -aːkw appears with three different kinds of subjects, three different VIs are needed: (i) -aːkw ↔ [3] / Voice₂[2PL]; (ii) -aːkw ↔ [INAN] / Voice₂[2PL₁]; and (iii) -aːkw ↔ [IMPER5] / Voice₂[2PL₁]. By requiring -aːkw to be analyzed as an allomorph of subject agreement, the allomorphy approach is forced to posit unwarranted homophony and fails to capture the true nature of -aːkw as a 2PL object marker.

4. Bidirectional portmanteaux. Kickapoo has the portmanteaux -akent ‘1PL»3’ and -ament ‘3»1PL’, which can be analyzed as realizing {{[1PL], [3.ACC]}} and {{[3], [1PL.ACC]}} respectively. In place of these two suffixes, the sister language Ojibwe (Nichols 1980) has a single portmanteau -angid that occurs in both contexts (1PL»3 and 3»1PL). Under a Multiple Agree analysis, Ojibwe -angid can simply be taken to discharge {{[1PL]}, [3]} without case features, thus allowing it to appear whenever Infl has agreed with a 1PL nominal and a third-person nominal. An allomorphy analysis, on the other hand, provides no unified way to capture the distribution of -angid, which would have to be analyzed as an allomorph of 1PL subject agreement in 1PL»3 contexts and an allomorph of third-person subject agreement in 3»1PL contexts.

5. Fissoned spellout of object plurality in Ojibwe. When Infl agrees with a plural third person, it is spelled out as a sequence of two adjacent suffixes, -d ‘3’ and -wa: ‘PL’, whose relative order varies. We regard this as an instance of fission: -wa: discharges the [PL] feature that was left undischarged by -d ‘3’. Crucially, this fission also occurs in portmanteau contexts: the portmanteau -angid ‘1PL»3’ mentioned above is augmented to -angid-wa: in 1PL»3PL contexts. With Multiple Agree, the analysis of -angid-wa: is straightforward: Infl agrees with [1PL] and [3PL], -angid discharges [1PL] and [3], and -wa: discharges the remaining [PL] feature. Under an allomorphy analysis in which Infl agrees only with the 1PL subject, however, it is difficult to explain why -wa: appears. If Infl only has the features [1PL] and these features are discharged fully by -angid ‘1PL»3’, there is no way to trigger the additional spellout of -wa: ‘(3)PL’.