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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Los Angeles

Tense Choice and Pragmatic Inferences:
A Study of Preterit/Perfect Oppositions
in English

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Linguistics

by

Robert William McCoard

1976
This dissertation of Robert William McCoard is approved.

Robert P. Stockwell

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1976
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FORMAT AND CONVENTIONS

There are seven chapters in this work. Chapter 1 is introductory, and Chapter 7 provides a general recapitulation. Each of the intervening chapters opens with a section explaining the plan of the chapter, and the last section states the conclusions arrived at. (In Chapter 6, the main review is in Section 8, followed by some speculative thoughts.) Footnotes appear at the end of each chapter. A general bibliography follows Chapter 7.

Words, phrases, or sentences used as examples are given with a single underline when they appear in the body of the text, like this. No underline is used when the example is separated from the text, like this.

Examples are not individually numbered, but within a few sections are marked alphabetically for convenient reference: (a), (b), etc. Double quotes enclose glosses, semantic paraphrases, terms used in a specialized sense, and brief excerpts from the scholarly literature. Longer passages are placed in single-spaced blocks separated from the main text. Italics are used for emphasis. Square brackets embrace comments, clarifications, or other editorial interpolations within examples or excerpts.

These conventions do not necessarily apply to quoted excerpts, where original usage is preserved. The exception is that I have replaced italics used in quoting examples with the single underline, and replaced emphatic underlining with italics, to lessen confusion.
Underlining is also used occasionally to "point out" particular parts of examples.

Examples are generally evaluated for acceptability within specific contexts; a preceding ? indicates "doubtful", ?? marks "very doubtful", * means "terrible". Disputed judgments are parenthesized.

Examples in French or German are provided with translations in brackets; translations are also supplied, where necessary, for Old and Middle English. Commentary originally in French or German is replaced by an English rendering, indicated by the preceding sign [F] or [G].

A small number of works were not available to me as originally published, and have been quoted at second hand; this applies mainly to German works of some age (Krüger (1914), Brinkmann (1906), Mätzner (1882), and Maurice (1935)) represented by extensive excerpts in Dietrich (1955), from which I have borrowed them.
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Although this work was written outside the immediate collegiate environment of graduate school, I have garnered assistance from a number of individuals, to whom I express my gratitude.

First is my committee chairperson and mentor, Professor Sandra Thompson, who over the course of my protracted graduate career has provided unremitting moral support, conscientious criticism, and an essential link with academe. Without her there would be no dissertation.

Professors Stockwell and Otero have also shown remarkable tolerance of my skill at procrastination. Professor Stockwell is chiefly responsible for protecting the reader's interests, and seeing that two words were not used where one would suffice. Professor Otero gave me initial stimulus to examine aspects of the Spanish verb system, which contributed indirectly to these pages.

Thanks are also due to Louise Riedel and Sue Beasley, librarians at SWRL, who provided access to many more documents of interest than I could have managed on my own; to Dave Snów, who bore with my innumerable interruptions to discuss ideas about language; and to Rob Cole, who kept me from wandering too far from my task during "free" time.

My parents never seem to have doubted that I would finish. I cannot imagine that this was sheer fantasy on their part, though for years there was no visible evidence of a manuscript. Perhaps the
secret is just that given the manifold encouragements of homecooked dinners, telephonic counsel, and their general credence that I knew what I was doing, it was inevitable that the process of doing a dissertation would finally end in having the dissertation done. A material addition to this support was my mother's efficient conversion of final draft into final copy. I think without this boon I would have melted into a puddle of Liquid Paper.

To all the above, my thanks.
VITA

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Tense Choice and Pragmatic Inferences:
A Study of Preterit/Perfect Oppositions

in English

by

Robert William McCoard

Doctor of Philosophy in Linguistics

University of California, Los Angeles, 1976

Professor Sandra A. Thompson, Chairperson

Descriptions of verb systems and how they work have traditionally been based on a rather loose terminology which tends to confuse the meaning of a form with the possible uses of that form. Semantic content is often ascribed to a given "tense" or "aspect" form which is in fact dependent on contextual clues, both linguistic and nonlinguistic, and thus is fundamentally pragmatic in nature. A case in point is the opposition between the periphrastic "perfect" forms, especially the present perfect (as in he has gone), and the "preterit" or simple past (as in he went) as it exists in modern English. Many different theories have been proposed to explain the differences in meaning of these forms, based on the study of examples embodying the contrast. We have classed the theories into four main types, named according to the basic characterization each theory gives of the meaning of the present perfect. The perfect is defined as (a) the past of current relevance; (b) the past of indefinite reference; (c) the past of the extended now; (d) the past which is embedded in a present tense.
Theories of class (a) hold that the perfect expresses some sort of relevance or bearing of a past act upon the present: he has gone serves to assert "having left, he is gone." The preterit, in contrast, does not make such a connection with the present. The difficulty with this approach is that there is no end to the various kinds of "relevance" which can be identified, and some of them are so vague and abstract that they are useless for discriminating the perfect from the preterit. Ultimately it appears that "current relevance" is not a well-defined concept in linguistic theory.

Theories of class (b) attempt to establish an essential similarity between the use of definite referring nominals like the house, and that of the "definite" adverbs which typically accompany the preterit, like yesterday. The perfect would then be the "indefinite" counterpart. However, there are adverbs like today which seem definite too, but which go with the perfect or the preterit. Definiteness is neither a sufficient nor a necessary criterion of tense choice.

Class (c) theories see the preterit as identifying a past event with an encompassing time-period which is past and gone, i.e. belongs to "then"-time. The present perfect, on the other hand, places the past event within an overall period which extends through the moment of speaking, and so constitutes an "extended now." We argue that this theory offers the most satisfactory account of the opposition of interest. Correlative adverb classes are discussed, as well as interactions with iteration, continuation, stativity, telicness, and other factors which feed into the interpretation of particular examples.

Class (d) theories analyze the perfect in terms of an underlying
structure which consists of a preterit subordinated to ("embedded in")
a present tense. (Surface preterits are unembedded.) Supporters of
this treatment argue from several different claims about the advantages
of "abstract" analyses of the verb-phrase in expressing significant
generalities of grammatical structure. Unfortunately, the semantic
model of the perfect which is entailed by the embedding hypothesis has
several of the faults identified in the discussion of (a) and (b) groups;
it relies on the notion of current relevance, and cannot generate the
proper adverb cooccurrences without resort to ad-hoc constraints.

Having discussed the nature of the preterit/perfect contrast as
it now exists, we turn to the question of its historical descent. The
original syntagm had a sense equivalent to that found in expressions
like he has the door closed; i.e. "he has the door in a closed state."
It is shown that this does not match the meaning of he has closed the
doors, reinforcing our earlier objections to (a) theories. It is argued,
on the other hand, that there was no complete break in the sequence of
development, that the periphrastic form was used very early as a true
past tense, and that apparent interchangeability with the preterit in
the Middle English period is not supported on closer examination of
contextual elements. Some speculations on future developments are
offered.

Throughout this work, we attempt to make a clear distinction
between the information borne by grammatical signals themselves, and
the inferential superstructures to which those signals contribute.
We hope thereby to demonstrate a useful approach in refining linguistic
descriptions.
Chapter 1

PRAGMATICS AND THE PERFECT TENSES

1.1. This work began as an attempt to clear up some of the mysteries surrounding the selection of a particular verb form in a particular context. Very often, the choices available within a given language-system are characterized in terms of categories such as "tense", "aspect", "action-type" (Aktionsart), "iteration", "durativity", "completion", "anteriority", "resultiveness", "stativity", and so on, but the terms themselves are thrown around with such looseness that they hardly appear with the same meaning in any two pieces of writing one cares to look at. This makes it difficult to do comparative studies, or even to construct a consistent and empirically useful theory for one language. In the course of reading treatises on a variety of languages, based on a number of descriptive models, I have become convinced that a good deal of the problem lies in the fact that there is frequent confusion between basic structural signals provided by a particular verb-form selection, and the contextual elaborations which are inferentially placed upon the signals. A form will have many uses, many concrete applications, but these must be sifted, sorted, and filtered with care to reveal the underlying "bones" of the system.

In recent years especially, there has been a great zeal among generative grammarians to identify all manner of subtle meaning-contrasts with distinct, and often quite abstract, "underlying" forms.
The closer these underlying forms come to being "logical" or "semantic" representations, the more they reflect the relations, categories, and properties of the real world. The world is thus assimilated to the grammar.

The trouble is that it is not clear how much information about the way the world works ought to be included in a grammar. The decision to represent a chunk of meaning in grammatical form is usually based on its explanatory "buying power": if a regular and pervasive meaning opposition can be bound in a relatively simple way to syntactic structures, that opposition will become part of the grammar. Everyone will then ooh and aah at the emergence of a grammatical rationale. On the other hand, a semantic opposition of messy detail and apparently great dependence on context is likely to be thought outside the limits of the grammar. Since we have no model for contextual contributions to meaning, we are forced either to ignore context, or to include it in some particularized form within the structure of underlying strings. This is not a happy choice, and it is often glossed over. Bollinger (1968) has this in mind in the following passage:

Flying planes can be dangerous clearly represents two different structures, as any native speaker of English intuits and as traditional grammar recognized by classing the -ing forms both as nominals and as adjectivals. Still, the suspicion remains that there may have been a little too much eagerness to find differences, and to account for them by positing underlying grammatical contrasts when actually the sameness in form may have been intentional, with a meaning so general as to embrace contrary interpretations which are not grammatical but depend on the context. (p. 120)

He exemplifies:

When someone says This food is somehow connected with John, we are quite willing to accept a single meaning that subsumes the food that John eats, the food that he produces as a
farmer, the food that he transacts in as a broker, the food that he transports as a carrier, etc. But with the shooting of the hunters we are not, as grammarians, willing to accept a single meaning at that same level of generality for of the hunters but insist on immediately specifying the of phrase as a subjective or an objective genitive. In other words, there is room for arguing that when structures are consistently identical, it is better to put off assuming a difference until the question of semantic identity has been pretty well explored. (ibid.)

This is where we come in. Among the persistent and prominent problems in the description of the English verb has been to accurately characterize the difference between forms we shall call "preterit"—like he went—and forms we shall term "perfect", in particular the "present perfect"—like he has gone. Most descriptive efforts I have come across break the opposition down into a variety of different subtypes according to type of lexical verb involved, type of adverb, plus other factors, including purely contextual and "world-knowledge" matters. Since such classifications derive from a mixture of parameter-types, it is not so surprising that they tend to be inconsistent, confusing, circular, and post-hoc. We would like to explore means of talking about the opposition of interest that puts context in its proper place outside of the skeleton, the framework, of the signals offered by the grammatical structure itself. We believe that this program will serve to reveal some of the intricate and elusive ways in which data and theories feed back and forth to one another, and especially how theories about tense-oppositions tend to become mired in the complexities of normal inference-generating processes that map individual utterances, in their highly selective, abstractified, and conventional spoken and written form, into the protean variability of the real world.
Of theories about the preterit-perfect opposition and related phenomena, there is no dearth. They are at least implicit in the long legacy of grammatical treatises and analytical schemata published well before the modern era in linguistics. Michael (1970) examined 299 tense-classifications of English contained in 248 grammars that appeared before 1800 and found almost every imaginable variant, from "purely logical" to "purely formal", from dusty Latinate schemes to idiosyncratic inventions. Nearly all of the modern debates are foreshadowed in these works, though often in a confused and contradictory form. Two works that make fairly explicit claims about the perfect/preterit opposition will receive our attention later--White (1761) and Pickbourn (1789). Other than these, however, we shall limit our investigation almost entirely to our own century, which provides much interesting argument on the areas of our concern.

The very fact that there has already been so much discussion of the verb makes it impossible to go very far in any direction without encountering an interconnected set of examples, and arguments related to those examples. A lot of what we shall have to say will be by way of reaction to specific examples and claims, some of which have become virtually institutionalized in the literature. There are certain favorite examples which seem to be repeated endlessly through one article after another; there are also certain idées fixes about such examples which persist to the present, and hamper the development of an adequate theory. A constant frustration in dealing with all of this is that there is scarcely an article or a book relevant to the subject which is not a virtual salad cf good examples with bad commentary,
insightful explanations applied to questionable examples, not to mention examples and analyses which do not actually address each other. We need to find our way around the mistakes while not losing the points of truth.

Our plan is to proceed through a critical exposition of the theories of a number of scholars, with various summarizing and expanding interludes along the way. This exposition provides an "armature" for the development of the main issues concerning the preterit/perfect opposition, for making it clear what the major theoretical positions are, and what kinds of arguments are involved pro and con. It is not easy to reduce these theories to commensurable form because the language is often vague and embodies a mixture of distinct characterizations. We have settled on a basic grouping of theories into the following four categories, named for the descriptor which each respective group associates with the forms of the perfect, that is, have + Ved:

(a) current relevance (CR)
(b) indefinite past (ID)
(c) extended now (XN)
(d) embedded past (EB)

By way of a rough indication of what meaning is accorded to the perfect by each theory, in opposition to the preterit, we may say that the perfect

(a) expresses a present state resulting from past action.
(b) expresses a past event which is unidentified as to time.
(c) expresses a past event within a time span which is continuous with the present, not differentiated into "then" versus "now".
(d) is made up of a past-tense sentence embedded as sentential subject of a present-tense predicate. The first two groups, (a) and (b), are fairly widely represented in the literature; (c) is somewhat uncommon, and is likely to be found mixed with (a) or (b); (d) is the product of the last decade of generative grammar, and is based mostly on complex structural arguments about derivational interrelations between sentences, rather than directly on a consideration of the semantics of the perfect/preterit opposition. There are secondary semantic justifications which have elements in common with (a), (b), and (c), especially with (a); at several junctures we will find it useful to consider EB theories in the light of our previous discussion of CR theories.

The pages to follow will show that we feel XN theory offers the best overall account of the perfect/preterit opposition and attendant phenomena. Elements of this theory crop up here and there in mixture with other theories (Pickbourn, Uldall, Sørensen, etc.), but it is rarely represented in unadulterated form. The most forceful presentation I have found is that of Bryan (1936), a somewhat obscure article which has been ignored by all but a handful of later scholars (Dietrich, Bauer, Ota, and Allen, q.v.); Koziol comes close independently. XN theory is hardly the "fairly unanimously accepted solution" that Bauer (1970, p. 189) hyperbolizes it to be; witness, for example, the latest major reference grammar of English (Quirk, et al., 1972) which speaks in completely traditional CR terms.

A later chapter is devoted to a consideration of the historical development of the compound perfect in English, which as we know was a relatively late acquisition in the language, as were also the analogous
forms in other Western languages. The earliest form seems to have been like the modern I have the letter written in both form and meaning, with have as the main verb, and written as an adjectival-participial complement of the object, indicating state. How this then went through the processes of change necessary to become the precursor of I have written the letter is a topic of some complexity; one puzzle we must confront is that there is supposed to have been a wideranging interchangeability of past tense forms in Middle English, but it is difficult to see how all the separate past tense forms could have engaged in such a free-for-all with the preterit and perfect dividing the field neatly between them at the conclusion. One or the other should have been lost in battle.

Throughout this work, we maintain a dominant interest in the way tense oppositions are described. An opposition like preterit/perfect may be put to very many different uses, supporting many different interpretive extrapolations in meaning, but it is wrong, I believe, to equate these extrapolations with the meaning proper of the forms themselves. The role of pragmatic inference-making, based on the individual's understanding of the way the world around him normally works, looms very large in the ordinary rounds of communication. But this does not make it part of grammatical structure. It will be shown that even those inferential meanings which seem to be absolutely firm in their attachment to one form or the other are actually rooted in the world-knowledge and belief of the speaker/hearer. Alter the structure of that world-model, and the supposedly solid implicational links dissolve. All that remains is a basic semantic opposition between the preterit as marker of past events which are identified with "then"-time
separate from the period of the present, and the perfect as marker of past events which are identified with "now"-time, the "extended now" continuous with the moment of communication or "coding".

Linguists have generally pursued the study of semantics by taking sentences as propositions, isolated from context. (Some contextual factors do get slipped into semantic and even syntactic descriptions, to be sure.) Pragmatically-minded analyses, on the other hand, direct attention to the contexts in which acts of communication are performed, and admit that many elements of the communicators' attitudes and presuppositions have a bearing on the form of their communication which is not easily mapped into a semantic model of sentences or sentence-sequences. It is the looseness of this relationship which makes it desirable to distinguish pragmatic descriptions of the use of expressions from the structural descriptions of their grammatical and formalizable semantic content. The boundaries here are by no means clear, but I feel that the attempt to keep these areas separate is rewarded with more insightful and generalizable views on linguistic structures than those provided by students of language who habitually cram as much heterogeneous information into their "grammatical" treatments as they can manage.¹ A major part of the task ahead is to identify some of the contextual "clues"—including linguistic ones such as verb-tense choice—which induce the hearer to construct or infer particular ideas which he quite unconsciously attaches to sentences as part of their meaning. (The speaker must have an understanding of the likely interpretation of such clues to avoid unintentionally misleading his audience.) It is not possible to provide an account which will generate all and only the
right inferences for each utterance/context set, but I think the general features commonly recurring can be described and related meaningfully to the particular grammatical opposition we are focusing upon.

The details follow; before we launch into our study of the main theoretical positions and arguments, however, it is appropriate to explain what is meant by "tense form" as a general category. The question of whether or not the present perfect and other perfects are tense forms will serve to set us on the track of subsequent inquiry.

1.2. Many grammarians have confidently described verbal expressions such as I came in terms of a category of tense: "past tense" or "preterit tense". In contrast, expressions such as I have come occasion a good deal of head-scratching: shall we call them instances of the "present perfect tense", or would "present perfect aspect" be better? Why not "periphrastic past" or "compound perfect" to bring out the phrasal character? Though both forms--which I will call simply the "preterit" and the "perfect", respectively--appear in similar environments, with meanings of sometimes barely perceptible difference, the usual view is that the perfect is not a second past tense, because it is probably not a tense form at all, properly speaking. This view is based in part on the fact that the auxiliary have seems to be freely added to the available "ordinary" tense forms, including the (phrasal) future:
I come                        I have come
I came                        I had come
I will come                    I will have come

It even shows up with the nontensed forms:

to come                        to have come
coming                        having come

All of which seems to argue that I *came* and I *have come* are not directly comparable in structural terms, though they may show up in competition with each other for other reasons.

What is the contribution of *have*? Those who bother themselves with this question often speak of a meaning of "completed action" or of "anteriority" to some designated time. These sorts of meanings are widely considered to be in the domain of "aspect", borrowing a term associated most strongly perhaps with Slavic linguistics--where it is used, however, in quite a different sense. A few scholars have been more inventive in identifying the semantic category of auxiliary *have*: Joos calls it "phase"; Bauer flirts with "semi-tense" but settles on "status"; others to be seen later. I will argue in this work that the sole function of auxiliary (perfect) *have* is to mark a temporal sequence relation of anteriority between the time of an event and some temporal reference point. Other theories, such as those which assign to the perfect the function of denoting a present state resulting from some prior event, are untenable, as I will show.

In nonfinite verb phrases, the reference point is normally undetermined: to *have come* expresses a prior event of coming, but doesn't say prior to what. Similarly, to *come* often expresses
simultaneity between an act of coming and some (unspecified) time. A relationship of posteriority appears in to be going to come, to be about to come, which are however not quite so thoroughly grammaticalized as have is as auxiliary. They are used where we would wish to say *to will come but are prevented by the particular constraints of our language from doing so.

The form he came and the other finite types are specialized in that they always identify the temporal orientation point or "root" with the actual moment of coding—the MOC, for short.³ (We exclude "sub-junctive" or "modal" uses of came, which depart from the dimension of temporality.) This identification is in fact the crucial characteristic of tense:

a reference—overt or implicit—to the now-of-the-present constitutes an invariable and indeed definitive feature of tensed statements. (Rescher & Urquhart, 1971, p. 27)

The essential characteristic of the category of tense is that it relates the time of the action, event or state of affairs referred to in the sentence to the time of utterance (the time of utterance being 'now'). Tense is... simultaneously a property of the sentence and the utterance. (Lyons, 1968, p. 305)

Tense thus fits among the "indexical" or "deictic" categories of language, comprising words like I, he, here, there, today, then, past, present, this, that. These all share the requirement that they must be used by a speaker in a particular token—in a particular context—before they can be assigned an extension or denotation and their meaning made complete. The turning-point of tense is the speaker's "now", which is not used to ascribe a characteristic to an object in the way the use of a nonrelational term such as 'red' might be said to do so. 'Now' is used by a speaker to state a relation he has to an object. Due to this fact, 'now' can be classified
as subjective since it, unlike the other terms already introduced [simultaneity and sequence] stands for a relation between a subject [the speaker] and an object rather than a relation between two objects. That is, simultaneity is a relation that holds between any two mental or physical events occurring at the same time. But obviously, standing in a relation of simultaneity does not provide a sufficient condition for saying of any event that it is occurring now. What makes the difference, Russell points out, is the introduction of a subject, not in the trivial sense that there must be a subject (a language user) in order to say that the events are occurring now, but in the essential sense that the semantics of 'now' are such that the word is used correctly only if an event instituted by the subject is one of the terms in the simultaneity relation connotated by 'now'. (Sedey, 1969, pp. 75-76)

Russell himself extended the argument to say that the existence of speakers was necessary to the concept of "past", but not to the concept "before":

In a world in which there was no experience there would be no past, present, or future, but there might be earlier or later. (Russell, 1915, p. 212; cf. Sedey, ibid.)

Sometimes an event may be temporally "located" by being related to a reference point which is in turn related to the moment of coding. Such a tense reference is indirect, but no less clear. Yet Huddleston (1969) considers indirect tense to be "nondeictic":

The axis of orientation is not always the speech act...It may be established by reference to the process expressed in the next higher sentence; in such cases the tense will not be deictic. Thus in I intended to do it yesterday (in the reading where yesterday specifies do, not intend), the lower tense is future—not with reference to the time of speaking, but to the time of intending: hence the analysis is future in the past. The 'in' thus gives us the axis; if there is no 'in', the tense is deictic, having the speech act as axis. (p. 790)

What Huddleston calls "deictic tense" is directly related to the MOC; "nondeictic tense" is indirectly related to the MOC by being embedded in a tense which is deictic. But this is not the same as saying that the "nondeictic" form is actually independent of the utterance context,
or that its temporal ties are unspecified, as would be the expected
traditional sense of "nondeictic". To avoid this confusion I will employ
the idea of deixis in a more liberal manner, and say that any verb form
which is directly or indirectly linked to the MOC for its temporal
specification will be considered deictic and tensed. We will return to
the topic of deixis later when we examine theories based on the notion
of "definite temporal reference".

Of course not all languages provide verbal forms which are
systematically and regularly marked for time-relationship to the MOC.
Other means are always available for tense-indication: adverbs, part-
icles, etc. This does not necessarily entitle us to call such languages
"tenseless", though superficial tense-markings may not be much in
evidence. In fact, certain theories recently developed hold that no
language is marked for tense at a deep level, and that tense is derived
by copying features from underlying adverb structures into the verb;
so-called "tenseless" languages merely lack this obligatory copying
process to a greater or lesser degree. Our focus in the present work,
however, is on the systematically marked tense forms of English.

We have asserted that the finite or tensed perfect forms will be
among the forms which are tied to the MOC; we have also said that the
perfect expresses a relationship of anteriority between the event and
its orienting time reference.\(^4\) If we want to speak of anteriority,
simultaneity, and posteriority relationships together, we might call
them SEQUENCE relations. Accordingly the finite perfect forms would
be markers of TENSED SEQUENCE. How does this compare with the preterit?

Certainly the preterit expresses a relationship of anteriority
between event and an orientation time, which is normally the MOC. Hence it should be considered a TENSED SEQUENCE form as well. How then is it different from the present perfect? I will claim that in the terms we have so far considered the preterit and present perfect are not different; their distinctiveness lies elsewhere. It is true that the perfect does not always appear in tensed form, while the preterit is always a tense: there are no forms *to went or *wenting. This means that the anteriority of the perfect is separable from attachment to the MOC, that it may "float free" in nonfinite forms; while the anteriority of the preterit is not separable. In these pages, we are primarily concerned with those forms of the perfect which stand in closest competition with the preterit and other tensed forms. Hence we shall speak mainly of those perfects which are tensed. Chapter 5 will consider some arguments relating to nontensed, infinitival perfects. For present purposes, then, perfects are tense forms—at least. What other meanings the perfect may mark in opposition to the preterit is the subject of our investigation in the following pages.
FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER 1

1. For a general discussion of the relations among syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, see Stalnaker (1972); for a commentary on the difficulties in maintaining clear distinctions, see Sayward (1974).

2. Kuryłowicz (1964, p. 93) observed that all have-forms ("compound perfects") indicate a relation of anteriority, whether or not the time-before-which is made clear. This is different from the "perfective aspect" forms of the Slavic languages, which do not express anteriority, but rather something like completion or a summing-up of the event as a whole. These perfective forms are paired with corresponding imperfective forms, which represent events as being in the course of development, or else without specific regard to completion. (For a thorough discussion, see Forsyth, 1970.) We can make rough comparisons between Russian and English:

   imperfect  On pisal pis'mo.  He wrote/was writing a letter.
   perfect    On napisal pis'mo. He wrote out a letter / got a letter written.
   imperfect  On čital knigu. He was reading (in) the book.
   perfect    On pročital knigu. He read the book through.

English does not have a standard grammatical term for such oppositions, though recently "telicness" has been gaining ground. Many "telic" or "goal-defined" verbal expressions in English are verb–particle compounds, like read through, think up, wait out, but not all: drown, forget. Some particles add little meaning of their own to the verb they go with; others retain more or less their full value, but still have the effect of "telicizing" the verb. In this, they are rather like the prefixes which in Russian are the normal means of constituting a perfective verb from an unprefix, imperfective one: прочитать is literally "through-read". There are of course other factors which we cannot take up here; we will examine further the nature of the telic/atelic opposition in English in a later chapter. For the present, it is sufficient to observe that telicness is quite distinct from presence/absence of the auxiliary have. Kuryłowicz calls the telic expressions examples of "genuine" aspect; Bauer (1970a, p. 197) types them "perfective aspect". The have forms are styled "relative" aspect (Bauer: "perfectic aspect"). Zandvoort (1962) on the other hand rejects the term "aspect" from the arsenal of English grammatical categories, arguing that English shows no consistent structural opposition parallel to that of the Slavic languages. I would say that "aspect" is not always a marked category in English, but that it does have some exponents in lexicon and grammar. Be that as it may, auxiliary have should not be confused with those aspect-like markers which may co-occur with it. As Ridjanović (1969, p. 40) remarks, any have-form

   fails what we believe should be the major test of an aspectual category: it cannot be used in the same tense

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as another set of structures to refer to the same situation in the 'real world'...

This objection holds most force to someone, who, like Ridjanović, treats the present perfect as a truly present tense. Though I do not agree with this view, I would certainly say that if, for example, we place the "progressive" verb forms among the imperfective aspect realizations of English, and the have-forms among the perfective aspect realizations, it is awkward to explain the frequent coalitions such as I have been saying: perfective-imperfective aspect?

3. I will use the term "moment of coding" in preference to "moment of speech", "moment of utterance", etc. for the reasons given by Allen, who objects to the use of the label "the moment of speech" because it suggests that every act of encoding, including that of writing, is an act of speech. Every written sentence may be "thought out" before it is written down, but this is not the same as saying that it is "spoken". There is another objection to the label "the moment of speech" which applies equally to such a label as "the moment of encoding": the "present" moment of reference is not always the moment at which a given sentence is either spoken or written down. It is common usage in present-day English to use a present tense for reference to a statement appearing in some book or shorter work, even though the sentence referred to may have been written down many years ago. Thus we say, "Herodotus tells us--", not "Herodotus told us--". This use of a present form like tells obviously refers, not to the moment of encoding--that is, to the moment when Herodotus first wrote down the statement being alluded to--but to the moment of our "decoding" of Herodotus' remark...It is possible to be non-committal as to whether the point of reference for present verb forms is "the moment of encoding" or "the moment of decoding" by using instead the equivocal label "the moment of coding". (Allen, 1966, p. 140)

Sometimes I will use "moment of speech" for variety, but it is to be understood as equivalent to the "moment of coding". I will also frequently use the abbreviation MOC.

4. Some consider a relationship of temporal sequence to be a "tense" relationship, regardless of the involvement or absence of the moment of coding. So for instance, Dubois (1972, pp. 7-8):

It is hypothesized that the essential meaning common to [the perfects] is that of priority to a point of reference.

...Since the meaning of the perfect is thus to situate the action of the verb in time, the perfect is tense, not aspect.
Anteriority we prefer to keep distinct from tense: anteriority may become tense by being tied to the MOC.

5. In a sentence like *He is thought to have left yesterday*, it has been argued, as we shall see later, that we have to do with a string transformationally derived from the same underlying string that produces *It is thought that he left yesterday*, containing the preterit. If so, the phrase *to have left* might be thought of as a "detensed preterit". Yet it is still interpreted with reference to the MOC, and moreover, as a preterit. It is thus different from the nonembedded, finite perfects which are our main focus. Whether *to have left* represents the counterexample of a preterit which is not tied to the MOC is moot: at the same underlying level where the form is still a preterit (presumably), it is also still tensed.
Chapter 2

CURRENT RELEVANCE THEORY

2.1. The task of this chapter is to examine representative claims and arguments made in regard to the perfect/preterit opposition by adherents of what we will term the "current relevance" or CR theory. More versions of this theory are to be found in the literature than of any other; yet in spite of a commensurate diversity in detail, they all essentially agree in holding that the defining function of the perfect in English is to express something in regard to current time, something having to do with a certain applicability, pertinence, or relevance of a prior event to the context of coding (the "now" of the speaker or writer). The preterit, in contrast, appears when there is no connection or relevance to the present of a prior event.

What is meant by "relevance"? Obviously it is not the same kind of relevance that generally constrains us not to wander too far from a given topic of conversation; otherwise, the preterit would be expressive only of mental disarray. Relevance is here to be taken in a technical sense, whose nature CR theorists are at pains to clarify. Something of this special sense can be seen in the contrast between, for example, he's gone to bed and he went to bed: according to CR theory, the former indicates that the person spoken of, "he", is still in bed at the time of utterance, whereas the latter does not support such an understanding. The "relevance" of the perfect in this case takes the
form of a suggestion or implication that the state consequent upon
going to bed, namely being in bed, still holds true for "him".

Of course other expressions will require other forms of rele-
vance than being in bed. Indeed, when we examine a fair number of
examples, we find that relevance has many concrete realizations, and
that these realizations are very dependent on the particulars of
word-choice and context. CR theorists are aware of this, but maintain
that behind all the complications, there stands an abstract principle
of relevance which may be rendered as "some state resulting from a
prior event continues to hold." Yet we shall find that in some cases,
even this general characterization can be argued with, in that the
"state" appears to be an ineffable construct of the speaker's mind
having no other demonstrable property than that it calls forth the
perfect. There is thus no consistent contrast with the preterit that
we can seize hold of on the basis of relevance; hence current relevance
fails ultimately to have any explanatory power as a theory.¹

Proponents of the theory are not generally very worried about
the fuzziness of relevance as an abstract concept, since they can offer
innumerable instances where relevance comes down out of the clouds, so
to speak, and appears before us in explicit and concrete form—as in
the implication of "still being abed" associated with the example given
earlier. Yet there is a flaw in the argument: even the most explicit
forms of relevance are not deterministically produced by the operation
of a rule which simply amalgamates the meanings of the individual
lexical constituents of a sentence; rather they are generated by inter-
locutors within the context of communication, and depend directly on

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their understanding of how events and consequences "hang together" in
general and in particular. Any alteration in these views, and the
 corresponding relevance will suffer change. This means that though
use of the perfect (or preterit) may serve to support a certain infer-
ence of result, the inference itself is not part of the meaning proper
of the perfect (or preterit), not part of the basic opposition sig-
nalled by the forms.² What the basic opposition is we will try to
determine later. Meantime, we will argue that though the preterit/
perfect choice is the instrument of many specific semantic oppositions
of the "relevance" sort, the name of the instrument itself is not
"relevance".

2.2. It can be shown that CR theory is not a recent creation, but
quite a venerable inheritance of traditional grammar. Certain favorite
examples seem to recur throughout the literature, together with the
opinion that these examples convincingly argue the correctness of CR
theory. Accompanying generalizations are somewhat less unanimous; one
of the earliest I have found is in White (1761):

We make use of the First Past Tense [=preterit], when we
refer to actions long since past, the performers of which
have already left the present stage of life. In this view
of it, it might be call'd the Historical tense. We also
make use of it when we refer to the past acts of ourselves,
or others not alive [sic!], when taken in a distant view,
or unconnected with present proceedings.
The Second Past Tense [=present perfect] is seldom us'd
but with respect to persons now existing, and with respect
to such acts of theirs, as have either been but very lately
performed, or such at least as are taken into view as connected with their present proceedings. (pp. 83-84)

Though White scants on examples, leaving us uncertain about the exact interpretation of the passage, we can identify at least three of the main themes that are elaborated by later scholars. These are the oppositions posited between

(a) remote events and those of recent times,

(b) events pertaining to persons presently alive and those of persons past and gone,

(c) events connected somehow with the present and those not so connected.

It may be seen that principle (c) is rather more abstract than the others, and indeed subsumes them; it is appealed to in later works just where neither (a) nor (b) will suffice. Its theoretical status will be considered below.

So far we have only sketched the form of CR theory; to evaluate it requires the close scrutiny of examples and the arguments they are supposed to support. Let us begin with a look at principle (a), which we may call the "recency" principle.

The recency principle predicts that any past event that can be characterized by the speaker as recent will necessarily appear in the present perfect; an event not so characterized will appear in the preterit. Modern grammarians do not usually put too much weight on recency, since there are many examples not readily accommodated by it.3 Poutsma (1925) thinks of the recency opposition mainly in terms of the choice of specific adverbs which accompany the perfect or the preterit, but not both:
The point of time denoted by just is understood to be so near the moment of speaking that it does not separate the action or state appreciably from the present. Hence it requires the predicate to be placed in the perfect. (p. 263)

But his example Mrs. Long has just been here could be exchanged for Mrs. Long was just here—in modern American usage at least. (Some differences between American and British usage of adverbs will be considered in Chapter 4.) Poutsma admits the preterit with just now, arguing that

the space intervening between the time indicated by just now...and the moment of speaking is felt to be long enough to justify the use of the preterit. Usage is, however, more or less variable. (p. 265)

It is clear that Poutsma would like to be able to say that adverbs are categorized as recent or nonrecent, and that these divisions are semantically natural, i.e. they correspond to actual differences in meaning along a scale of recency. It doesn't quite work out that way, however. The purported difference in time-sense between just and just now appears quite artificial, and the only clear index of a difference are the co-occurring verb forms themselves—which are at least partly "variable". It would be nice if "nearness to the moment of speaking" had some specific external indicator in the physical world, but this does not happen to be the case, as we can see from examples like just in this century has literacy become fairly widespread.

A different problem with the recency notion emerges when we consider adverbials such as never and always; these are undefined for recency. Poutsma, changing his terminology somewhat, considers them to mark "a certain undefined space of time not distinctly thought of as severed from the moment of speaking", making the perfect the "normal
"The perfect is in favour with verbal, the preterite with nominal predicates" (p. 263).

The mistake, in my view, is the assumption that the adverbials in question cannot represent periods of time separated from the MOC. Most of them are quite free in this respect, and may apply to any period which the speaker imagines:

In my heyday, I was always falling in and out of love.

When we were friends, I never thought he would do such a thing.

Neither of these takes kindly to the perfect, the first presumably because one doesn't normally speak of one's heyday until it is in the past and separate from the MOC, the second because of the presence of a when-clause, which is as a rule limited to the preterit with noniterative events. (More details on these matters later.)

Having disputed the recency principle of preterit/perfect oppositions, we have to grant that there may be a preponderance of adverbs of "relative remoteness" with the preterit, and that the perfect is more often employed with recent events; as recency is defined by each context. Sørensen (1964) offers the following perspective:

It is no doubt true that a person who says that he has bought a car—especially when he says "a new car"—is more likely to be the owner of a car than one who says that he bought a car (at such and such a time). That, however, is because we are more inclined to use an identification of past time—and therefore a preterite—when the action took place some or a long time ago than
when it took place in the immediate past; which, again, is to say that the perfect, as regards the point of the action is statistically more of an immediate past than the preterite is. (p. 79)

The statistical tendency for I've bought a new car to be interpreted as an act of the past recent enough for the new car to be presently in evidence, rather than as an expression of something done in the course of one's life (Have you ever bought a new car?) is not to be confused with the basis of verb-form choice. We will explore these matters in further detail subsequently.

2.3. In evaluating the principles (b) and (c), which we may call "present existence" and "present connection" respectively, we will turn first to Jespersen (1931), who is one of the staunchest proponents of C.R theory. He generally lumps (b) and (c) together, and distinguishes them from a variety we have not discussed before, the "inclusive" principle:

The perfect...is itself a kind of present tense, and serves to connect the present time with the past. This is done in two ways: first the perfect is a retrospective present, which looks upon the present state as a result of what has happened in the past; and second the perfect is an inclusive present, which speaks of a state that is continued from the past into the present time. (p. 47)

What Jespersen refers to as "retrospective present" is exemplified by

He has died.

I've walked up from Haslemere.

He has taken the matter so much to heart that he has remonstrated...
These have in common, Jespersen says, the fact that they communicate something about the present, stemming from a prior event. Another term used by him is "retrospective perfect"; an equivalent and nowadays more common term is "resultative perfect", which I will prefer in subsequent reference. Charleston (1955) speaks of "retrospective aspect".

Examples of Jespersen's inclusive present are:

He has lived here for three years.

He has been dead four days.

Black falsehood has ineffaceably soiled her name.

I have never seen my boy, since he was a tiny baby.

All of these express an "action or state...still lasting at the time implied in the sentence" (p. 56). We will consider how this characterization relates to the other forms of current relevance later. I will employ a more common equivalent term "continuous perfect" in place of "inclusive present", and consider it the fourth CR principle, (d).

Now, since the perfect is identified as a "sort of" present, it is important to see exactly how it differs from the meaning of the "real" present tense, for they cannot be quite the same:

he has come and he is come are not to the same extent 'retrospective presents'...for the retrospective element is much weaker in he is come than in he has come, so that the element of the present is preponderant...he is come is a pure present, much as he is here or he is present... (p. 31)

He is dead might in certain respects be considered a perfect of he dies...still, there is some difference between he is (was) dead and he has (had) died. The former is a real present and emphasizes the state, while the latter is a retrospective and emphasizes the transition that has taken place. He is dead = 'he is not living'...; he has died = 'he has ceased to live, he is no longer living'... (pp. 54-55)
It is of course no longer the case that he is come is in direct com-
petition with he has come, being archaic; it is also a point of debate
whether the two were ever in systematic contrast, and if so, how. (See
Chapter 6 for discussion of this and other questions concerning
historical development.) What is important here, though, is that the
perfects do not simply assert present states, but express the "transi-
tion" between a prior event and the consequent present state. Accord-
ingly, the meaning of he has died is something like "having died, he is
dead". It appears that Jespersen is identifying the information that
"he is dead", which is an inference made by the hearer and intended by
the speaker, as part of the built-in semantic burden of the perfect.
Thus inferential relationship is equated with grammatical form.

This is an interesting but hazardous line of thought. In the
world of our normal experience, the relationship between dying and being
dead is indeed a firm one—but it is not without exceptions. We can
easily imagine cases of the dead magically (or scientifically) resur-
rected, and in fact there have been documented cases where persons
certifiably dead have been restored. The point is not a quibble about
whether a person has really died at all if we find he is subsequently
alive, in any sense we choose. It is that given the appropriate—and
in these cases, extraordinary—context, the message "he is dead" is not
there, and consequently cannot be a specific contribution of the perfect
form. It is misleading to say there is only a difference of
"emphasis" between he has died and he is dead: the latter asserts only
a present state, and normally implies a prior event; the former asserts
only the prior event, and implies the present state according to the kind

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of contextual conditions we have been talking about. Since I am making it a central principle of my argument against CR theory, let me reiterate: inferences mentally associated with assertions in particular contexts are not part of the structural meaning of the verb forms employed in those assertions.4

Jespersen's view on the function of the preterit is not unexpected:

the preterite...refers to some time in the past without telling anything about its connexion with the present moment. The question 'Have you finished?' refers to the present moment ('Are you through?'), while 'Did you finish?' asks about some definite portion of past time. (pp. 60-61)

Apparently Jespersen doesn't believe an English speaker would ever say Did you finish? in any situation where he might also ask Are you through? This seems a dubious claim at best. But having identified the perfect with highly specific information about present resultant states, the preterit must embody the specific converse of that information, or at least lack positive indication that a certain state holds.5 We will see that Jespersen makes the stronger claim that the preterit actually implies the converse of what is implied by the perfect:

It is a natural consequence of the definition [of the preterit] that in speaking of dead people the preterit is necessary, except when reference is to the result as affecting the present day. Thus we may say: "Newton has explained the movements of the moon" (i.e. in a way that is still known or thought to be correct, while "Newton explained the movements of the moon from the attraction of the earth" would imply that the explanation has since been given up). On the other hand, we must use the preterit in "Newton believed in an omnipotent God", because we are not thinking of any effect his belief may have on the present age. (p. 68)

Here we are given two options to base our tense-choice on: we can use
the preterit in talking about dead persons, where current relevance would have the value "presently alive", principle (b) of our earlier discussion; or we can talk about the deceased in the perfect as long as the effect of their past deeds still holds, signalling, as Twaddell (1968) puts it, "a significant persistence of results, a continued truth value" (p. 8). This comes closest to our earlier principle (c).  

2.4. Let us first take a closer look at the "present existence" option. Jespersen illustrates with a literary example:

The difference between the reference to a dead man and to one still living is seen in the following quotation which must have been written between 1859, when Macaulay died, and 1881, when Carlyle died (note also Mr. before the latter name):...Macaulay did not impress the very soul of English feeling as Mr. Carlyle, for example, has done. (p. 67)

This is a very neat distinction; unfortunately, it does not countenance an emended version along the lines of...as the late Mr. Carlyle, for example, has done. Apparently it is not required that Mr. Carlyle himself maintain a bodily existence, but only that he abide, as it were, through personal influence--through his literary productions. Thus, where principle (b) is inadequate, we slip into principle (c).

This weaker, or more abstract, version of CR is adopted by many other CR theorists. A notable early advocate is Pickbourn (1789); he reports the opinion of a "learned friend" that

We may say, Cicero has written orations; but we cannot say Cicero has written poems. We suppose Cicero, as it
were, still existing, and speaking to us in his orations; but as the poems are lost, we cannot mention them in the same manner. (p. 33)

In general, [the perfect] may be applied whenever the action is connected with the present time, by the actual existence, either of the author, or of the work, though it may have been performed many centuries ago: but if neither the author, nor the work, now remains, it cannot be used. Thus, speaking of priests in general, we may say, they have, in all ages, claimed great powers; because the general order of the priesthood still subsists. But if we speak of the Druids, or any particular order of priests, which does not now exist, we cannot use this tense. (p. 34)

The Ciceronian example and argument appear in nearly identical form in Dietrich (1955, p. 192), who got it from Murray's English grammar of 1853: Cicero has written orations is possible because the orations still exist, and thus indirectly continue the period applicable to Cicero himself down to the present. On the other hand, we say Cicero wrote poems because the poems are lost and so do not provide the necessary connection with the present.

There is a certain plausibility to the argument, but it immediately runs into trouble with equally plausible examples such as All of Cicero's poems have been lost, in which it may well be the case that the non-existence of the works provides the connection with the present. (We might be speaking about great writers and orators known to us only by name and reputation, for example.) In regard to the preterit, we can see that My friend here, Max, wrote the speech you are now reading does not deny the present existence of either Max or his speech. Nor, for that matter, would Cicero wrote poems tell us, by itself, anything about the status of Cicero or his poems; we depend on external knowledge to supply these data.

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We have so far been speaking about the actual existence of people and objects as they influence tense choice, but we must also allow for a kind of "virtual" existence touched on by Pickbourn when he imagines Cicero "as it were, still existing, and speaking to us in his orations". It is within the conventions of normal speech to grant a sort of "conditional present existence" to well-known personages, but there are limits, as R. Lakoff shows (1970, p. 844):

Shakespeare is a renowned playwright.

Shakespeare has written impressive dramas.

*Shakespeare is a notorious drunkard.

*Shakespeare has quarrelled with every other playwright in London.

As along as we keep close to the subject of "his writings", we can speak of Shakespeare as if he were alive, and have therefore sufficient grounds for choosing the perfect. Even this restriction is absent, of course, in stories and fantasy; it is enough that entities be represented as extant.

Donaldson (1973) gives some examples which at first glance seem to support a present-existence criterion for tense choice. She posits (p. 156) a situation where one of the speaker's parents is dead but the other is still living. Then neither the preterit nor the perfect seems quite suitable:

(*) My parents have always been champions of civil rights.

(*) My parents were always champions of civil rights.

The problem, as Donaldson puts it, is that the term my parents has "faulty reference", because one of its referents no longer exists. But alternatively, the reference may fail because one of the parents changed
opinion on civil rights somewhere along the way. If the other one dies, then the set again becomes consistent. There are, in fact, any number of factors that can change, to alter the existence of a specified set: the statement Bill's sisters were all blondes does not necessarily mean that Bill is bereft of sisters, he may simply no longer have any blond sisters. Donaldson says the only requirement is that whatever the attribution, it must apply to all members of the set, and cannot be mixed, e.g. half the sisters dead and half with gray hair (p. 158). Even this constraint may be too strong, however.7

The underlying operative principle in all these examples we have been discussing seems to me to be this: use of the perfect reflects some reason for placing Cicero, Max, Shakespeare, etc. and/or their poems, plays, etc. within a span of time conceptualized as extending right up to the present, as a past continuous with the present. It frequently happens that such a period is connected with individuals or objects still extant; one may say that ceteris paribus, the time-span of the perfect will usually be specifically associated with the present existence of the entity or set within its field of reference. But this is only one kind of connection with the present, and may be overridden by other factors.
2.5. Let us return to the example about Newton, in which the perfect was supposed to imply that Newton's explanation is "still known or thought to be correct" by the speaker. (The same example appears in Poutsma, p. 264.) First we observe that if we were to apply principle (b), which specifies that something must "presently exist" for the perfect to be used, it would be impossible to identify this existence with any obvious surface constituent: it is presumably "Newton's explanation" that exists. The sense of "exists" is special, too, being roughly that of "presently valid". Now, even with these allowances, it appears that we are constraining the reading of the perfect/preterit opposition too strongly: consider that some reprobate who rejects all theories subsequent to that of Newton would then necessarily utilize the present perfect in speaking of Newton's work—assuming, of course, that he did not reject Newton as well. But this need not be the case. We can perfectly well say

In the history of Science, Newton's theories have been of premier importance, though they have been superseded.

Or with the preterit,

In the history of Science, Newton's theories were of premier importance, and many of his ideas are still considered valid.

In the first version, the past is "thought of"—to use Jespersen's own words—as extending up to the speaker's present; in the second, he is thinking of some sub-part of the past which is separate from the present, possibly something like "in Newton's own time". Working from these basic temporal contrasts, our inferential capacities set about to generate various possible correlations: we may infer that the connection or separation from the present regards the validity of a theory,
or a person's lifespan, or perhaps a certain span of relevant history.

Bryan (1936) offers these possibilities:

if one were writing a life of Newton...the account of his explanations of the moon would be presented through the preterite tense, however valid the explanation might be today. If, on the other hand, one were making a survey of the achievements...of British scientists throughout a period extending from some point in the past up to the present, one might well use the perfect tense even if the explanation had lost its validity. (p. 372)

Sørensen (1964) rejects the "present validity" explanation, but seems to cling to a kind of "present existence" idea:

what is relevant, as regards the present moment, is not the result, but the movements of the moon...They belong to the present, since they still exist. And by a logical coup d'état, they are made the subjects of discourse...and thereby make the moment of speech a quasi-legitimate point of reference; quasi-legitimate, for although the movements of the moon could have been explained at any time, they could not have been explained by Newton, at any time between the zero point (the day when Newton was born) and the moment of speech. (p. 82)

Rather than defend the "quasi-legitimateness" of the perfect on the basis of the present existence of the moon and its movements, it seems better to retain the more general conception that where there is reason to speak within a framework of past-to-present, the perfect is sufficiently justified.

The belief that the perfect signals fixed, concrete information about present states is certainly persistent in the literature, and deserves a few more strokes of criticism. Poutsma provides us another example that has been batted around by various writers; he explains it thus:

the perfect is correctly used in *The British Empire in India has succeeded to the Mogul...because the results of this succession are still extant in the present*
occupation of India by the English. [NB written in 1926.] If the preterite were substituted for the perfect, the implication would be that the British occupation has been superseded by another. (p. 264)

An appropriate rejoinder is given by Bryan:

the perfect tense is employed not because "the results... are still extant...", but because the history of India is being considered during some period of time that extends to the present. If the events of history had been considerably different from what they actually have been, one might write: "within the last two years the British Empire in India has succeeded to the Mogul, the Russian power has followed the British, and now Japan has displaced Russia"...without the slightest implication of any extant results of British and Russian occupation... (p. 373)

That is, the perfect is part of the representation of "history-so-far".

A similar idea accounts for the contrast between

??Assyria has had many able rulers.

Britain has had many able rulers.

It is not simply a matter of the actual existence of the countries spoken of, but of our conceptions of the countries including their respective temporal associations in normal contexts. Maurice (1935) puts it like this:

Assyria, as now extinct, the whole import of which is consequently severed from the Now, necessarily projects us into the past, hence the entire thought starts from and is engaged upon this alone and is accordingly expressed in the Preterite. The mental picture...is: 'Assyria was a country'... (p. 326)

And Dietrich echoes:

[6] What makes the use of the preterite necessary is not... the objective situation in itself that Assyria no longer exists as an independent country today, but rather the naturally associated fact that as a consequence of the current state, the concept "Assyria" lies outside the conceptual field of the present and of the present-awareness of the speaker, so that this name can comprise only a time-period detached from the present. (p. 191)
The speaker has the choice of excluding "Assyria" from "the conceptual field of the present"—and in normal contexts he is expected to do so. It is this expectation which makes Assyria has had... sound odd, not a hard-and-fast grammatical incompatibility based on the absolute fact of Assyria's antiquity.

2.6. We have argued that the more concrete versions of current relevance are applicable to no more than a subset of examples with the perfect. We have seen that the preterit is supposed to represent "current non-relevance", yet here again, the attempt to pin it to any of the more literal interpretations runs into problems. Remembering that Jespersen made much of the preterit/perfect opposition as it relates to a contrast between living and dead personages, it remains unavoidably true that he died offers, in the normal run of things, just as firm a communication about the subject's present state of demise as does he has died. Principle (b), "present existence", obviously fails; but is principle (c) more successful? Maurice (1935) is puzzled that

The world war [WWI] is over; it lies completely in the past; but can anyone deny that its results are still felt at present? And yet we cannot say: "The war that has taken place in 1914-1918." (p. 323)

Accepting that certain events are of such import that the fabric of the world would be materially changed in their absence, we still cannot produce the perfect in the above example. In a similar vein, Dietrich observes that we generally say Gutenberg discovered the art of printing,
despite the fact that

[G] there is hardly any other event of the past which—as far as objective consequences or effects—so undeniably extends into the present. (p. 195)

Dietrich says that the concepts "invent" and "Gutenberg" turn one's thoughts to the past, but that a change of viewpoint is possible in the proper context: Have not the Germans invented printing; are they not the best chemists, etc.? Here the "Germans" idea, as a concept embracing the present, overcomes, as it were, the generally past associations of "Gutenberg's invention". In a similar manner, America was discovered by Columbus evokes the past, and so the preterit; but America has been discovered by Columbus, thus you need not do it "has the emphasis on the present situation." (ibid.) We may also point to the comment that is sometimes made, that if current relevance is really what it is supposed to be, we should have no problem with I have been born in 1944 (substitute the correct year of the speaker's birth), since the speaker's own birth would undeniably count as relevant to him. Most views of CR are more sophisticated in that they attempt to deal with "relative relevance" to the particular occasion of utterance. Yet it is true that even great real-world relevance, however defined, is not by itself sufficient to promote many examples to acceptability.

There is no external measure of relevance, no absolute significance, which requires the perfect. I maintain that the key is whether or not the speaker chooses to include a prior event within the compass of his "extended present". As long as we insist on identifying a reason external to the speaker for the choice preterit or perfect, we risk making the concept of current relevance completely vacuous. As
Allen (1966, p. 142) observed, in many cases the "element of result" associated with a particular perfect is scarcely more specific than the bare fact that the event has or has not occurred--and in this, is hardly distinct from the preterit.

There are some further wrinkles in CR theory which deserve our attention; at this juncture we want to have a closer look at the category of perfects Jespersen called "inclusive", for which I prefer the term "continuous". This class corresponds to principle (d) mentioned earlier. It is important to see how it relates to the other subtypes of current relevance we have been studying.

2.7. The continuous perfect is often thought of as one type where current relevance has an indisputably concrete interpretation, and the opposition with the preterit is easily demonstrable. For this reason, it is often taken as the case par excellence of the opposition, which has contributed to the general search for concrete versions of relevance.

An example like I have lived here for ten years is taken to mean (or at least definitely imply) that "I still live here." The "living here" continues right up to the MOC. In contrast, I lived here for ten years is supposed to imply that "I no longer live here." But things aren't as simple as they seem. We are taking the examples in a context-free, "average" reading. When we say I have lived here on and off for ten years we are uncertain about whether the present is an "on" period
or an "off" period. The same question attends I have lived here for a period as long as ten years, responding to What's the longest you have ever lived here? Twaddell (1968, p. 8) gives the example My family has lived in this town since 1638 as clearly continuous, but Diver (1963, p. 147) counters with My family has lived in this town, but not since 1638. I might add, My family has lived in this town on and off since 1638. And on the preterit side, I lived here for ten years before I got to know my neighbor does nothing to inform us about the speaker's present domicile.

It is somewhat curious to realize that the most likely, "neutral" interpretation of I've lived here without adverbial supplements, involves the inference that the speaker is not presently living here. This is especially so if we emphasize have, which leads Hill (1958) to make the flat statement that

Primary stress on have breaks any connection with action going on at the present time. (p. 212)

An exception must be recognized, however, in It's true that I have lived here for ten years now, which does not "break the connection" with the present. A similar objection may be made to Crystal's assertion (1966) that

one should note the probability that /I've been to the Old Vic/ refers to an occasion in the more distant past, whereas /I've been to the Old Vic/ refers to the very recent past... (p. 8)

As I commented earlier, probabilities are not very satisfactory in explaining the use of verb forms, and their interpretations; for one thing, probabilities are so easily upset, as by adding just or just now to the first version, for example.
I think the speaker's choice of verb form, and the hearer's inference as to the significance of such choice, is based on an entirely different principle than distribution of accents or specific adverbs. It is something like Grice's principle of cooperation in making well-formed discourse, which constrains the speaker not to say things in a way which may lead the listener to draw erroneous implications. He explains (1975):

Sometimes one can say that the use of a certain form of words in an utterance would normally (in the absence of special circumstances) carry such-and-such an implicature or type of implicature...

Anyone who uses a sentence of the form "X is meeting a woman this evening" would normally implicate that the person to be met was someone other than X's wife...Sometimes, however, there would normally be no such implicature ('I have been sitting in a car all morning') and sometimes a reverse implicature ('I broke a finger yesterday').

(p. 56)

In a sense, the speaker must anticipate what the listener's likely reaction to what he says will be, and give just enough information to steer him in the right direction.

Applying these ideas to the cases in hand, we can argue that if someone says simply I have lived here, we take him to be implying that he does not now live wherever "here" is, because if he were still living there, he should have expressed the situation as I live here. Where there is no apparent reason for him to involve a specifically past-to-MOC reference, he would not be expected to use the perfect. Where such a reason does present itself (as rendered, say, in since 1934), the perfect will be responsively utilized.

Sørensen seems to have the same sort of thing in mind in critiquing an example of Sweet's, I have lived here a good many years.
(Sørensen's "incomplete perfect" equals my "continuous perfect"):  

Sweet says that the speaker is necessarily implied to be still living in the place referred to (which is what makes 'have lived' an incomplete perfect). That is not correct. For can we not say, 'Have you ever lived here?' We can. However: such a question would be meaningless if the listener was living, or was believed to be living, in the place referred to at the moment of speech. Now, if the listener has lived in the place referred to, he has necessarily lived there for a certain length of time, e.g. for a good many years. The listener may therefore answer, 'I have, I have lived here a good many years'. He may even elaborate his answer. Thus: 'I have lived here a good many years, but, as you seem to know, since your question would otherwise be absurd, I am not living here now'. (pp. 76-77)  

The "first-choice" reading of I have lived here since then will usually be that the speaker still lives "here". But let us add other relevant information, I have lived here every winter since then, and we are no longer so sure that the speaker is in residence (though he certainly is "here"), since the time of speaking may not be winter. When I have lived here since then is placed in a context of separate occasions, such as whenever I am on vacation, whenever I can afford it, and so on, the "first-choice" reading changes dramatically to an iterative sense. In fact, certain types of activities are customarily understood to involve separate, more or less regular, occasions: I have always slept here. (Of course the understanding that one does not normally talk coherently in one's sleep defeats the possibility that the speaker has been on one continuous sleeping binge.) The shift from a continuous perfect to an "iterative perfect" is seen to depend on some rather subtle properties of context and interlocutors' world-views.
2.8. This may be further illustrated with the stative analog of
Jespersen's example he has died, namely he has been dead (...) which
has all the basic indeterminacies of the former, as Sørensen observes:

if it were possible for a person to die more than once,
we could certainly say, "Angus has been dead twice, but
right now he is immensely alive, owing to the unparalleled
skill of Professor Hatray, the famous cardiologist.'
This, by the way, is not mere speculation, so far as I know.
(p. 78)

Normally, once dead is dead forever, but along comes the mad (?)
scientist, and ZAP goes the normal inference!

And precisely because the content of normal inference is inde-
dpendent of particular verbalizations, exactly the same ambivalences
attending the interpretation of he has died attend the preterit
counterparts:

It follows that if we were to say that 'has been dead'
is an incomplete [= continuous] perfect, we would also
have to say that 'was dead' and 'died' are incomplete
preterits. (ibid.)

I noted in an earlier example, I have lived here a good many
years, that the speaker may or may not be understood to be still resi-
dent here. The choice seemed to be between a reading of presently-
continuous state ("I've lived here a long time now") and a reading of
a vaguely remote episode in the past ("I've experienced living here
before for a good while"). Yet there are instances where the intended
sense seems to be somewhere between the two, as Tregidgo (1974) shows:

"He hath been dead four days" could have been said of
Lazarus either before or shortly after his resurrection.
Similarly one can perfectly well say, for example: "I've
been a teacher for ten years, but I've just been dismissed,"
or "I've lived here all my life but now I'm going away."  
(pp. 102-03)

It is as if the recentness of the state's conclusion makes it not quite
real, not quite established—the overall period is still thought of, by the speaker, as being only in the process of separation from the present, and so he retains the perfect. This points up, once again, the essential subjectivity of the speaker's conceptualization of time periods which is at the root of the perfect/preterit choice. It also means that Curme (1935) goes too far in saying that

the passing of a single minute may make it impossible to employ the present perfect. A minute before 12 o'clock in the morning we may say 'I have 'ought a new hat this morning.' A minute later this morning is gone for ever and we must say 'I bought a new hat this morning,' for the morning belongs to the past. (p. 321)

Similarly overstated is Palmer (1968):

We may say I've seen him three times today, but I saw him three times yesterday and not *I've seen him three times yesterday. Similarly I've seen him this morning is a possible utterance only if it is still morning; if the morning is over, the period of time indicated is wholly in the past and a present perfect form cannot be used. (p. 75)

It is true that we cannot say *I've seen him yesterday by itself; I will argue later that this is because yesterday is categorized as an adverb which cannot include the MOC. But this morning is not thus limited: I saw him this morning/I've seen him this morning. The combination saw + this morning most usually yields the understanding that the morning is past; have seen + this morning typically goes with the idea that the morning is not yet over. Yet as I have just been arguing, even these distinctions are not inviolable. The particular subdivisions of time important to the speaker may not be those most evident in the conventional calendar or time-table. Dietrich (1955) fails to realize this, too, and is bothered by an example borrowed from Caro:
The following morning about noon, Rose...closed the school-door behind her with a sign of relief, and tripped up the road to Burwood. "How abominably they sang this morning." (p. 147)

Dietrich is puzzled at the use of the preterit [C] "even though the morning is not yet over and she has only just brought the singing hour to an end!" (ibid.) Rose may be intent upon a subpart of the morning which is (blessedly) over, namely the singing period.

We will explore more at length the phenomena of "unexpected" preterits and perfects in Chapter 4. There is no doubt that some rationale could be found for these exceptions under the all too ample rubric of "connection with the present", principle (c) adduced earlier. The difficulty of providing this principle with substantive and predictive content remains, however.

2.9. At this juncture I wish to return to the subject of those perfects denominated "iterative" (class (e), for future reference). Jespersen considers a number of examples in which "the perfect often seems to imply repetition" (p. 70) but makes no special category for them. Many of these contain an adverbial phrase based on the conjunction when and the striking thing about them is that the reading seems very strongly iterative:

In Anthony's great speech at Caesar's funeral...he generally uses the preterit, but says "He hath brought many captives home to Rome [they are here still]. Whose ransomes did the generall coffers fill: Did this in Caesar seeme ambitious?"
When that the poore haue cry'de, Caesar hath wept"—
this probably in accordance with the rule...(repeated action
with when), but some grammarians find fault with it. A
little further down the 2nd citizen says: "If thou con-
sider rightly of the matter, Caesar ha's had great wrong"
—here, the preterit "Caesar had g. wr." would have im-
plied, on one particular occasion. (p. 67)

Now it is quite true that when that the poore haue cry'de... suggests
repeated events. Regardless of just how this is effected by the
interaction of when or other contextual elements, the iterativity is
neither a property of the perfect alone, nor is it strictly in oppo-
tion to the preterit. Contrary to what Jespersen says, Caesar had
great wrong does not necessarily refer to a single event; there is no
intrinsic resistance to the addition of often, many times, and the like.
Thus it is only the apparent lack of a noniterative ("singulative")
reading which differentiates when + perfect. That this is a localized
and idiosyncratic lexical characteristic of when is suggested by
other examples like If I have erred, there was no joy in error (p. 70)
which readily admits either reading. Then there are cases like I have
knowne those which haue walkt in their sleep... (ibid.) which seem
bound to be read as iterative, but for quite different reasons, since
there is no adverbial to begin with. (In this latter example, we must
contend with the unlikelihood—the relative unlikelihood—that the
persons of interest have walked in their sleep on a single occasion
only.)

The reason I think Jespersen is playing around here with iterati-
vity is ultimately that he is uncomfortable in the attempt to
identify Caesar has had great wrong etc. as a continuous or as a
resultative perfect. He cannot argue that Caesar's having great wrong
is conceived as a state of injury continuing up to the MOC, since Caesar himself does not continue up to the MOC. (This might contrast with the example mentioned earlier, Black falsehood has ineffaceably soiled her name (p. 57) which, while not falling in with the majority of continuous-perfect examples that contain clearly stative predicates, may be read statively, as "has kept her name soiled" or something similar. More on this later. ) Nor can he place much weight on the resultative (his "retrospective") principle, since the effective, immediate cause of Caesar's present state of immortal repose was presumably not the disapproving opinions referred to as "great wrong". Not to forget that there is the iterativity business. Voilà the iterative perfect!

2.10. Another scholar who was struck by the frequent iterativity of the perfect was Zandvoort (1932). He accepted the resultative and the continuous types, but felt there was a third type to be recognized. It is interesting to see how he came to the conclusion that this third type was not really iterative after all.

Zandvoort's initial focus had been upon perfects in subordinate clauses of time, as in When I have asked a singer...whether he sang a particular song, I have often received the reply... Despite the presence of adverbs of iteration such as often in many such examples, the perfect appeared to be iterative on its own terms, leading Zandvoort
to go as far as to claim (in his dissertation) that iterativity was
the characteristic feature of perfects in subordinate clauses. Later,
however, he began encountering examples which seem to bear iterativity
in main clauses without the expected adverbs, e.g.

I have left home before sunrise of a precious Sabbath
morning, traveled..., preached..., and then footed it
home by early bedtime... (p. 109)

Those privileged to be present at a family festival of
the Forsytes have seen that charming and instructive sight
—an upper middle-class family in full plumage. But who-
soever of these favoured persons has possessed the gift of
psychological analysis... (p. 111)

Zandvoort began to think that the perfect might be iterative by nature
—at least wherever it was not continuous or resultative. But then he
came upon a poem of Matthew Arnold's containing the line

And once, in winter...have I not pass'd thee on the
wooden bridge?

which follows directly upon various other perfects with the iterative
sense, such as Men...have often pass'd thee near... This challenged
Zandvoort's sense of consistency:

The inexorable question presented itself: how can a
construction that is compatible with the use of the
adverb once be essentially iterative? And yet there
was no denying that the function of the perfect in
these several stanzas of Arnold's poem is the same...
One after another element of my proposition—when,
the temporal clause, iteration—having dropped off as
non-essential, what remained? (pp. 110-11)

What indeed? Zandvoort finally decided that the only crucial thing
about all the examples with perfects was that they

contain a statement based on personal...experience.
...The perfect of experience may be said to constitute
a genus, with an iterative and a non-iterative (or
neutral) species, each with its several varieties.
(p. 111)
Even iterative experientials are not clearly distinct from other perfect types, since as we found in discussion above, there are certain areas of vagueness between "true" continuous perfects and those which express events or states which "skip" across intervals, consisting of regularly repeated segments. A case which Zandvoort considers strictly iterative, I have done nothing but eat and drink since I have been here, is actually ambiguous, since it may be speaking of a single occasion of gorging, or may instead be read more in the sense of "there have been more occasions of my eating and drinking than anything else". (It does not seem likely to be understood as literally continuous if extended over several days!) The dependence upon specific contextual elements for the determination of iterativity is readily shown in other examples of Zandvoort's:

I have perpetuated the death of bulldogs, greyhounds, mastiffs, horses, hogs &c., in my Obituary, under an idea that they were people of consequence. (p. 114)

I have left out, for the most part, satire and epigram where the intention has been to wound and not to please. (p. 115)

In cases like the first, Zandvoort admits that "at most one can say that repetition in these quotations is suggested by the plural nouns" (p. 114). The suggestion is strong, to be sure, though one can imagine a single hoax of major proportions being perpetrated on the hapless obituary-writer. Cases like the second do not offer even plural nouns for guidance, yet the sense seems to be vaguely iterative—something like "I have reacted to each instance that arose of truly sour sentiment by passing it over for inclusion." There is, in fact, a real question as to what counts as iteration, one we cannot resolve by
fiat. Nor is the issue clearer with the preterit (e.g. I left out, for the most part...).

Even when perfects follow upon one another in rather close sequence, we cannot assume that they are all of the same type. Consider the following passage:

The publication in book form of the ephemeral triflings of a writer who prefers to conceal his identity, has drawn attention once more to a most regrettable state of affairs. The cheap gibes and vulgar music-hall jokes of this comedian have for long been a source of annoyance to all who have at heart the dignity of Letters. He has called in question, in a most downright manner, the genius of such men as Ibsen and Strindberg. He has assailed with the vilest abuse such unassailable names as Mr. Joad and Mr. Aldous Huxley. He has laughed loudly and rudely at Mr. Galsworthy and Sir James Barrie. Nothing, apparently, except his religion, is sacred to him. (p. 114)

Here has drawn seems to be functioning as a resultative perfect; have for long been looks rather more like a continuous perfect; as for has called, has assailed, and has laughed, we seem to be offered a series of rude actions illustrating the churlishness of the target author, which presumably makes these perfects experientials. It is quite impossible to tell from the passage itself whether any of these indiscretions was committed more than once.\textsuperscript{12}

Once iterativity was abandoned as a mark of the perfect, what was left? As we saw above, Zandvoort turned to the notion of "personal experience", very broadly conceived. Although he makes no direct comparison between the resultative and the experiential subtypes, it is possible that he viewed the resultative as expressing "concrete results" in the present, while the experiential connects the event with the present more abstractly "as part of the sum total of the writer's experience". (p. 116) This sounds rather like a restatement of
principle (c) that we talked about earlier. Just as we found (c) vague enough to encompass all the more explicit versions of current relevance, Zandvoort's experiential perfect seems to lack an identity of its own: experientials are those perfects which are not tagged as resultative or continuous. The experiential principle doesn't offer much insight into the preterit opposition; would we want to say that any past event which the speaker refers to via the preterit has not entered into the sum total of his experience? In the end, Zandvoort's attempt to establish a distinct, experiential perfect serves instead to show up a number of weaknesses in CR theory.

2.11. It has been noted at several places that a major difficulty with the CR approach is that it seems to require that the preterit be somehow lacking, or neutral, in respect of current relevance as compared to the perfect. On the level of highly specific forms of relevance, the opposition is not reliable, since many preterit expressions involve the same intimations of consequences as their perfect counterparts; on the level of abstraction, the preterit is identified as the bearer of somehow "irrelevant" information. This latter seems to go against the very nature of communication and suggests a curious worldview. We might argue together with Sørensen that nothing is irrelevant in the great chain of being:

Any past event, significant or negligible, is connected, or may at least be plausibly maintained to be connected
with the present, in one way or another, directly or indirectly, through its results or consequences, since whatever is is the result of past events, and since whatever was cannot have vanished into thin air, leaving no trace whatsoever. (p. 79)

While Sørensen develops this and related ideas into a rejection of CR theory, Joos (1964) makes an effort to build a case for CR that avoids the paradox of irrelevance. He acknowledges

A finite verb will hardly be used to specify an event unless there are effects; it is fair to say that language is not organized for entirely idle talk but is rather well adapted to mentioning things because they matter. Let us take it as axiomatic that the referent of a finite verb is regularly the cause of certain effects—unknown, perhaps, often unforeseen, but in any case not assumed to be nonexistent—since otherwise the finite verb would be idle, otiose, and rather left unused. (p. 138)

In Joos's terms, the preterit does not deny events their consequences, it simply places both event and effect at more or less the same time in the past, and does not refer to them separately: they are thus in "current phase". The perfect, in contrast, focuses attention on the resultant component separately from the originating event. This is "perfect phase":

the events designated by perfect verbs may be interesting in themselves, and may have simultaneous effects, but all that is now treated as uninteresting; the focus of attention is entirely on the delayed effects which remain uncertain until separately specified by other verbs. It is this focus of attention that determines what effects will figure as principal effects...the essential point here is that the meaning of perfect phase is that the principal effects of the event are out of phase with it...that the event is not mentioned for its own sake but for the sake of its consequences. (p. 140)

Joos illustrates with examples taken from Sybille Bedford's play, The Trial of Dr. Adams:

'The Judge came on swiftly' is the beginning of Trial, and the simultaneous effect is that he is seen to come,
the immediate effect is that he is here, and later (perhaps delayed) effects can be taken for granted. (p. 139)

The preterit here doesn't bother us about the present traces of the act of coming on. This stands in contrast to the series of perfects in

'The high-backed chair has been pulled, helped forward, the figure is seated, has bowed, and the hundred or so people who had gathered themselves at split notice to their feet rustle and subside into apportioned place.' (ibid.)

of which Joos claims

This is not simply a narration of events in sequence; instead, certain of them (is seated, rustle and subside) are presented as effects (or at least the possibility of their occurrence is an effect) of the earlier-in-time events stated in the perfect phase. (p. 140)

Joos is evidently of the opinion that "delayed effects" are well-defined properties of the present which follow upon some event.14

Is seated is very likely an effect of a prior act of sitting down. But now just what is the causal event associated with rustle and subside? -- probably the judge's entrance and chair-taking. But such a relation isn't spelled out in so many words, and remains much looser than the tie between sitting and being seated. This seems to be what Joos means when he says that "at least the possibility of occurrence" of some events is the effect of prior events. Here we have a vastly liberalized notion of cause and effect, however. If we start with the event the figure...has bowed, we might expect to see the figure still bent over, or there may be some entirely nonphysical effect ("so now the others present can sit down"). Yet all that has actually been said is that prior to the MOC, the judge bowed -- it does not tell us, in fact, whether or not the judge has since unbent! In spite of the perfect,
we don't know for sure what the "principal effects" of the act are.

This is just the opposite of the phrase rustle and subside which asserts an event without pointing toward an identifiable cause. Yet Joos insists that

the English perfect does not mean that the specified event occurred previous to some other event specified with the current phase. [The moment of coding?] That is a possible interpretation of it, but it is not what it means, just as many other kinds of utterances can be interpreted into messages that they do not intrinsically mean: 'How do you do?' meaning 'I'm pleased to meet you' but interpretable as an inquiry about health. The previous occurrence is at most a connotation of the perfect phase; its denotation indeed contradicts that by telling us that the event presented in the perfect phase is not being presented for its own sake but only as a means to a separate end, and its denotation positively is that we must look elsewhere for the important message. (p. 144)

It seems Joos has got things backward here—literally. How do you do?, How goes it? and the like elicit the respondent's state of being in virtue of their form, but they are normally interpreted instead as social gestures. Other questions (How do you like it here?) have only their literal function. A statement like you have seen the Cheshire reports which according to Joos "is not a past-tense message" (ibid.) may in fact have a virtually unlimited number of effects or relevances in the present, among them

...so you know what the reports say
...so I won't have to hunt them up for you again
...so you know how voluminous they are
...so you're certainly better informed than I

But the only question we have a firm answer to has to do with your seeing certain reports at some prior time.
Somewhat confusingly, Joos allows that

If the later effects of an event are of great interest, that does not in itself require that precedent event to be presented in the perfect phase; it may be enough for the addressee to know that it did take place, and when later another, thus prepared-for event comes along, he can make the connection himself... (p. 142)

Apparently the perfect is marked for "present effect", while the preterit is simply unmarked for this meaning. But notice now that the fact of an "important" present effect or relevance is insufficient to predict the form of the verb. Moreover, it is as if the perfect and preterit are virtual free alternates; cf. a later remark

the perfect marking seems to be not an abstract element HAVE -N but rather the mere insertion of completed words have, has, had, into completed verbs; for example, 'They have shot President Kennedy' seems to be 'They shot President Kennedy'... plus an extra have too pedantic for such an occasion, that is, too frivolous [sic]. (p. 146)

As Dubois (1972) points out, Mrs. Kennedy's immediate reaction to the murder was Oh, my God, they have shot my husband!

Here, rendered in the present perfect, is an event worthy of mention for its own sake, if any event ever has been; and it is to be hoped that Joos would not accuse Mrs. Kennedy of pedantry and frivolity in these circumstances. (p. 23)

Other aspects of Joos's analysis remain open to question, of which I will just mention a couple. He considers the fact that the perfect "cannot be used for narration" as in *I have seen him yesterday to be evidence of the exclusively present denotation of the perfect (p. 145). Yet surely I have seen him recently is narrative, unless "narrative" = "couched in the preterit." Besides, if the perfect is really a present tense, then why doesn't an adverb like recently go with the honest-to-gosh present: *I see him recently? And if the preterit and perfect
are so closely interchangeable (cf. quote above), how is it that they are placed in completely different grammatical categories?—the preterit as "remote tense" (p. 121) and the perfect as "perfect phase", not a tense "in any sense of the term, however loose". (p. 145)

Ultimately it is difficult to say that Joos has succeeded in his defense of CR theory. Once again, it turns out that when we press for the answers to some hard questions, CR theory isn't up to snuff.

2.12. Having discussed the nature of CR theory as propounded by several grammarians of basically traditionalist or structuralist bent, we come to inquire after the status of current relevance among linguists of the generative/ transformational school(s) of recent predominance. We find that such matters as the meanings of verb forms are largely ignored, but there are a few attempts to deal with the perfect which are of interest to us. For example, Chomsky (1970), in addressing various cases where the semantic interpretation of a sentence seems to depend partly on properties of surface structure, deals briefly with examples of the perfect in which linear word order appears to play a role. He starts from John has lived in Princeton which he says "quite generally...is taken as presupposing that John is alive" (p. 85). Knowing that "Einstein has died", we would say Einstein lived in Princeton, rather than Einstein has lived in Princeton. Likewise, all the following seem to presuppose the denial of Einstein's death:

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Einstein has visited Princeton.
Einstein (among others) has told me that...
Einstein has taught me physics.

whereas the next three do not:

Princeton has been visited by Einstein.
I have been told by Einstein (among others) that...
I have been taught physics by Einstein.

These latter all have Einstein placed later in the sentence by the passive transformation, bringing a presently-extant entity to the front where it accords with the "presupposition" of the perfect.16

This presupposition cannot, of course, apply to Einstein has died, and Chomsky maintains we could say this only "under rather special circumstances, e.g., if Einstein's death had just occurred" (p. 85). Nevertheless, "it is not invariably true that the use of the present perfect ...presupposes that the subject is alive" (ibid.). This observation is then reinforced by the possibility of saying Aristotle has claimed... but not Aristotle has visited..., a phenomenon we investigated previously. The present existence presupposition is also disturbed in coordination. Given

Hilary has climbed Everest.

Marco Polo has climbed Everest.

we are to understand that Hilary and Marco Polo are alive, but this does not hold for Marco Polo in

Marco Polo and Hilary have climbed Everest.

Marco Polo and many others have climbed Everest.

Everest has been climbed by Marco Polo (among others).
nor for anyone at all in Many people have climbed Everest. (p. 86)

The coordination of Marco Polo and Hilary may even be implicit, extending across sentence boundaries:

it seems to me that if Hilary had just announced that he had succeeded in climbing Everest, it would have been appropriate, without the presupposition that Marco Polo is alive, to have said: "But Marco Polo has done it too." (ibid.)

Chomsky concedes that "intuitions about this matter do not appear too firm" which does not surprise me. The present existence presupposition fails in cases of explicit denial (has died), in talking about cultural figures and their legacy (Aristotle), and when talking about groups of people whose temporal coordinates include the present (Marco Polo et al.) What do all these have in common with those cases which do seem to imply a living person as subject? I believe that they all represent ways in which the past event is construed as part of the period which includes the MOC, as part of the extended present. Particular interpretations about being alive take off from this basic datum.

McCawley (1971) agrees that this being alive "is merely inferrable from the presupposition of the sentence plus factual knowledge" such as the knowledge that Einstein must be alive to do any visiting (p. 106). McCawley's explanation of the "presupposition" is rather technical, and I shall defer close examination of it until later (Chapter 5), but the gist of it is that the event expressed by the sentence is presupposed to be still possible of occurrence. What constitutes the "event" is not always the same as the surface structure proposition. McCawley says that the difference in acceptability among
(*) Einstein has visited Princeton.

(*) Princeton has been visited by Einstein.

Einstein has visited Princeton.

Princeton has been visited by Einstein.

comes from the fact that in the first two we are talking about "events of Einstein visiting", which are no longer possible because (as we know) he isn't alive, while the last two are said to be about "events of visiting Princeton", which is a current possibility.¹⁷ This division also applies to statements about cultural figures: It is possible to say Frege has been denounced by many people as long as it is possible for his theories and teachings to be denounced. Another variety of "present possibility" (which was also suggested in passing by Joos, and can be taken as a sixth main principle of perfect/preterit choice, principle (f)) is identified in the contrast between

Have you seen the Monet exhibition?

Did you see the monet exhibition?

where the former refers to an exhibit still going on, the latter to one already over (p. 107)—that is, unless the preterit is chosen for other reasons of impossibility, such as when the addressee "has recently suffered an injury which will keep him in the hospital until long after the exhibition closes" (ibid.).

Yet even McCawley's rather flexible notion of present possibility is insufficient to deal with many other examples we can think of, like

My sister has graduated summa cum laude.

My old friend has died in an auto accident.

The last rays of the sun have disappeared forever.
without making up some tortuous interpretation of the repeatability of such events. We will see later that McCawley opts to place such examples in one of two subcategories of perfects which he declines to relate to his general explanation of present possibility. His formalized theory generates the perfect by placing a past event within a "range" that includes the present, so that we have a past tense embedded under a present tense. The technical problems of this proposal will be discussed later, but it may be noted here that there is a general affinity with my analysis of the perfect in terms of the "extended now". It is possible to see the notion of "present repeatability" as but one manifestation of the meaning of the perfect, but McCawley does not stray from his attachment to repeatability as the crucial feature.

Another generativist who has occupied himself with the mysteries of the perfect/preterit opposition is Anderson (1973b). He deals with some of the examples we have already encountered, about Einstein and Princeton and so forth, adding his discovery that in "existential causatives" like *These figures have been/are sculpted by Rodin, the present existence of the surface subject is not sufficient to ensure the well-formedness of the sentence. To explain this anomaly, as well as the Einstein-Princeton examples with different surface word-order, Anderson proposes an underlying structure in which "the existential tenses of an argument agrees with that of the tensed predicate it is most immediately subordinate to, unless it is 'present'". (p. 335)

In this conception, not unlike McCawley's, the present perfect is constituted of a non-past verb (has), dominating the (deep) subject,
plus a past-tense verb (visited, sculpted, etc.) which in turn dominates the object:

```
                      V
                     / \  
                    /   \ 
                  N  V  N
     Einstein    has        visited Princeton
               /     \          /
            /       \        /   \    
          /           \      /     \   
         /             \    /       \ 
        /               \  /         \ 
       /                 \|         \ 
      /                   \|         \ 
     /                     \|         \ 
    /                      \|         \ 
```

To fit the constraint, passives must be generated by transformation, so that the present-tense are in are sculpted won't be there in deep structure to "save" the anomalous *These figures are sculpted by Rodin.* (Actually, this sentence strikes me as odd for a completely different reason: we would seldom use are sculpted as the equivalent of have been sculpted nowadays. See Chapter 6 on the history of the perfect.) It is also required that the progressive not be analyzed as an embedded present tense (contrary to Huddleston (1969) which we will look at later), since these figures are being sculpted by Rodin sounds OK, even if it makes a false assertion.

Anderson's analysis really belongs among the "embedded past" theories we will study in a later chapter. But since his only argument for the embedded structure is that it is supposed to correctly represent the existential status of nominal referents, which is a variety of current relevance, I have placed him here.¹⁸ In later discussions, I will evaluate the embedded-tense theories in greater detail, but for the present it is enough to repeat my objection that the concept of current existence represents the interpretation of the perfect/preterit contrast only partially. If, for example, we take Einstein has visited Princeton out of context, the sentence is left to establish its own
context in the hearer's mind, which will fill in whatever knowledge and associations bear upon the concept of "Einstein visiting Princeton". If the hearer knows about Einstein at all, he is likely to know that Einstein is dead, which by itself may establish a past-time context. But let there be any present-including context, and the perfect becomes available, e.g.

What wonders this century has seen in human endeavor! Ford has given us the automobile, Marconi has given us the wireless, and Einstein has given us relativity!

Or, rather less coherently, "...and Einstein has visited Princeton!"

Even if we allow posthumously influential persons to be "sort of" alive, it remains necessary to discriminate more finely than just alive-or-dead. Anderson's binary structural constraint is therefore wrong-headed, and his justification of tense-embedding loses its foundation.

2.13. In the present chapter we have examined a number of attempts to identify the present perfect with "current relevance" in opposition to the preterit. Among the properties offered as characteristic of CR have been recency (a)

present existence (b)

of the surface-subject referent
of the deep-subject referent
of a certain state of the subject referent
of a "posthumous personage"
of a belief in the subject referent and his ideas
of the object referent

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unspecified "connection with the present" (c)
continuance of a state into the present (d)
iterativity (e)
present possibility (f)

We have observed that the preterit does not consistently oppose the perfect on any of the above counts. Each of the more specific versions of current relevance is inapplicable to more than a small range of examples; the most generalized variety ("connection with the present") is unable to afford any intrinsic means of setting the preterit apart. We have argued that current relevance is not a fixed semantic content born by a particular verb form, but is only the name of diverse implications that may attach to sentences, based in part on the appearance of one or another tense form.\(^{19}\) Tense-choice is, as it were, only one clue to, or index of, the subjective and objective content of the interlocutors' situation as it is filtered and compressed into linguistic communication.\(^{20}\) One of the very few who appreciate the full force of this fact is Bryan (1936), from whom we borrow the conclusion that any idea there is of results or consequences is not implied in the perfect tense form but derives from the meaning or character of the verb, or from the context, or from the statement as a whole. That is, to assign to the perfect tense-form itself a resultative function means a failure in analysis and a consequent confounding of essentially different matters. (p. 369)
FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER 2


It is only too easy to define the meaning of a morpheme as that which is common to all its uses. The definition is vacuous if the common element is not also a peculiar element.

2. I will speak loosely of "results" or "effects", though Vendler (1967) insists they not be confused:

Speaking the effect language we are talking about the dependence of events and processes in the world; using the result language we talk about the relation of facts. To say that a tidal wave is an effect of the earthquake is different from saying that the tidal wave is a result of the earthquake. The tidal wave as an effect—that is, as a process—is strong at the center but weakens with distance; it lasts for days and reaches vast areas where it can be felt, observed, or measured. The tidal wave as a result—that is, the fact of the tidal wave—is neither weak nor strong, it does not last, does not spread, and cannot be watched. On the other hand, unlike the former, it can be asserted and denied, believed and disbelieved, remembered and forgotten. The difference between them is not merely generic, it is categorical. (p. 160)

3. This was recognized at least as long ago as Mätzner (1882) though it has been lost sight of frequently since then: [G] "[the opposition] has nothing to do with the objective temporal distance" (p. 93). The error has been perpetuated in certain grammatical terminologies; in Italian, for example, the traditional terms are "passato prossimo" (= present perfect) and "passato remoto" (= preterit).

4. Even if it were the case that certain inferences always go with the use of certain words or forms, we would not be entitled to say that those inferences are part of the meaning of the words or forms in the strict sense. Shopen (1972) remarks that two expressions may be logically (assertionally or implicationally) equivalent without being semantically equivalent. For instance,

The expressions John has never married and John is a bachelor have LE [Logical Equivalence]. One cannot be true without the other; however, they are not interchangeable in the context 'because he can't stand the ceremony':

John has never married because he can't stand the ceremony.

John is a bachelor because he can't stand the ceremony.

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The difference in acceptability of the two examples is due to the internal semantic structure of the expressions has never married and is a bachelor, and it appears to be a matter of meaning vs. entailment. 'Not marry' means not to undergo a certain ceremony, while 'bachelor' only entails that. Thus, the anaphora with the definite article in the ceremony has an altogether coherent interpretation in the first case and not in the second. The parameters along which semantic structures vary can have cognitive or perceptual value, it would appear, without necessarily having significance for truth value; this is to say that language embodies a characteristic of mind of being able to conceptualize the same thing in more than one way. (pp. 241–42)

Similarly, Chomsky (1975):

"I found a proof of the parallel postulate" and "I found a Euclidean triangle with angles adding up to 200°" have the same truth value in all possible worlds, but are utterly different in meaning and correspondingly make different contributions to the truth value of sentences in which they are embedded (e.g., "John believes that..."). (p. 85)

5. The idea that the preterit "asks about some definite portion of past time" belongs to another theory, which is the subject of Chapter 3.

6. Millington-Ward (1966) offers a slightly different version of (b) which seems to incorporate (c):

the suggested result or influence that has come from the past up to the present has come, usually, to affect the subject of the tense. Thus, we do not normally use this tense unless its subject is still alive, or still exists, at the moment of speaking.

It would be wrong, therefore, to say: "Peter Robinson, who died ten years ago, has been cruel to his children", because since he is dead, he cannot now be affected in any way by a result of his having been cruel to his children... [e.g.] his children...probably hate him. (p. 50)

7. Donaldson reports that one of her informants could admit the mixed reading. This possibility seems to come more to the fore in variants like Bill's sisters were all blonds when they were young. It may be that the constraint that inferences apply to the entire set of referents should be replaced by a principle that says "the simplest, most immediate inference is one which applies to all referents, and lacking contextual indications to the contrary, the simplest inference will be assumed to be the appropriate one." We can say The Marx brothers were
my favorite comedians when I was little without requiring all the
brothers to be gone, or all here, for that matter.

8. Palmer (1968) expresses distress at the ability of specific temporal
adverbs to block the realization of current relevance, that is, to
block the use of the perfect: we cannot say *They've come last Monday.
He laments

English would be the richer if this were possible, for as
it is we cannot in a single phrase combine the two pieces
of information about (i) their arrival at a specific time
in the past and (ii) the current relevance of this. Current
relevance may be indicated only if the period of time that
is stated is one that includes the present. It is because
the present perfect indicates such a period of time that
it is not possible further to specify by an adverbial a
past time at which the activity took place. (p. 75)

It is curious that Palmer never stops to consider whether the perfect
does in fact supply datum ii, since he elsewhere makes allowance for
results that are nothing but "nil results" (p. 74).

9. R. Lakoff argues on apparently similar grounds that

If 'present relevance' is a meaningful concept, only
[*Are you now and have you ever been a lexicalist?],
and not [Are you now or have you ever been a lexicalist?],
ought to be acceptable. (p. 844)

I.e., once a lexicalist, always a lexicalist! I will argue later that
it is actually a Gricean principle of conversational informativeness
that prevents us from saying the first: if you are now a lexicalist,
then most likely you have been a lexicalist for at least a little
while, so the second part of the question is redundant as it stands.

10. Sørensen offers a similar example of non-continuous state in the
perfect:

Has he ever been unconscious for any appreciable length
of time?
You can bet your life he has...
Tell me, then, for how long has he been unconscious?
He has been unconscious for twenty-four hours.
That was when his face was bashed in in a
downtown joint. (p. 77)

Dubois (1972) spurns the example, saying "It is hazardous to rely on
the intuition of a writer who can cite 'patternese' as acceptable
English dialogue" (p. 25). As it stands, however, the example is only
rather unusual, and it certainly fits with the idea of an "extended
now" reference period, which Dubois accepts as a theoretical base.
11. See Spears (1974) for investigation of these phenomena.

12. Bryan (1936) suggests the slight tendency for the perfect to be read as iterative in some cases may derive from the fact that the perfect tense...gives wider scope for the presentation of a repeated or habitual action than does the preterite, which cannot carry a survey as far as the present moment. (p. 375)

That is, the perfect offers more "room" for repetition than the preterit; we are still dependent on outside factors to tell us if this "room" is in fact occupied by repetitions, however.

13. This seems to be the implication of Maurice's (1935) claim that in

'have you ever been in England'...what is asked about is the existence or not of an experience recognized as existing at that very moment. (p. 317)

But how can the experience fail to exist for the speaker if he is talking about it? Were you ever in England? also requires recollection. Perhaps Maurice intends to promote the idea that the perfect emphasizes that the speaker has not forgotten his particular experiences of being there, though this is a hazy notion at best.

14. Chafe proposes that the actor or the physical result of an act must exist, that is Bob has opened the door "would not be an appropriate thing to say if either the door were now closed or Bob were now dead" (p. 172). He immediately liberalizes this strong requirement on current relevance, however, to deal with Bob has sung, where

Depending on the context, the consequence of this event may be that we are now aware that Bob can sing, having previously doubted it; that it is now possible for Bob to go home, since he has completed what he was here to do; that it is now time for the next act to take place; or something else. Whatever the particular consequence may be, [Bob has sung] says that this resulting situation now obtains... (ibid.)

Given this wide range of possible relevances, it is surprising that Chafe characterizes the perfect as saying that everything is understood to obtain at the time of reference, as in a nonperfective [i.e. present-tense] sentence, except that either the beginning of the state or the event which produced the situation is pushed back to an earlier time. (ibid.)

This is to claim that Bob has sung has the same meaning as any number of present-tense assertions such as Bob can now go home, etc., but obviously, while such sentences may be appropriate to the context of speaking, they are not simply substitutes for Bob has sung.
15. The complementary position that the perfect is unmarked for iterativity, but the preterit is marked for non-iterativity, is found in Leech (1969):

The... specification for the 'indefinite past'
[present perfect]...is identical to the definition
of the simple past [= preterit], except for the
omission of the definite formator [i.e. definiteness]
and the ascription feature [-PLUR]. (p. 144)

This would be hard to reconcile with I watered my neighbor's lawn
every day while he was away last summer.

16. It is true that if the positive version of the sentence Einstein
has visited Princeton is taken to imply the present existence of the
subject, the negative version may do so equally as well (Einstein
hasn't visited Princeton), and in this the inference fulfills the
definition of a presupposition. But since this particular inference
is not the only one possible, I hesitate to elevate it to the status
of presupposition.

17. Inoue (1975, p. 27) suggests a variety of "events" that might be
connected with Einstein has visited Princeton: "speaking of Princeton";
"speaking of people visiting Princeton"; "speaking of German scholars
and how many of them have come to the U. S. over the years". The
"present possibility" idea echoes Deutschbein et al. (1926):

[6] The perfect is used when the speaker believes that
the act or process can be resumed in the present,
or is still possible. (p. 69)

18. Anderson claims his embedded-tense analysis is supported inde-
dependently in Anderson (1973a), which deals with a "localist" theory of
the progressive; he admits there, however, that this hypothesis
"cannot be extended in any obvious way to perfects" (p. 102). Since
he has offered no direct semantic evaluation of the perfect, we cannot
take his embedded analysis of the perfect very seriously.

19. Inoue (1975) offers insightful criticism of some of the same
examples we have been studying from Jespersen, Chomsky, McCawley, and
others. She arrives at a realization of the diversity of current
relevance, but does not draw from this the conclusion that CR is not
a well-defined concept, as I do. Her final generalization is a list
of the main ways current relevance is interpreted:

The presupposition of present relevance in the English
present perfect works in two different ways depending
on the speaker's intention. That is, (1) when he uses
the present perfect to refer to an activity or state
which has continued up to the speech time, the presup-
position is that the activity or state obtains at that
moment, or obtained until very near that moment. The activity or state may or may not continue into the future. (2) When the speaker uses the present perfect to refer to an activity which occurred in the past, then, (a) present relevance always works on the topic of the discourse at the time... (b) The topic of the discourse can be any one of the NP's in the sentence, or it can be a proposition of the type, or it can be a broad subject which is entirely outside the sentence in the present perfect. (c) The meaning of present relevance is interpreted as 'physically alive or existing' when the topic is a person or thing. And lastly, when it is an abstract notion, it must be current, i.e., living in an abstract sense. (pp. 32-33)

This covers most of the particular varieties of CR I encountered, all right, but I cannot say these are "rules" for interpretation, especially lacking constraints on the "topic" of the sentence, and I feel that Inoue has failed to distinguish uses of the perfect from the basic meaning of the perfect.

20. The terms "subjective" and "objective" are sometimes used to describe the difference between perfect and preterit, but users do not agree which is which. Maurice (1935) says the perfect expresses "an everpresent state of mind connected with the past act as a practically unconscious inference only" which is necessarily a "purely subjective state of affairs" (p. 322). The perfect opposes the preterit as "actual" to "factual" (ibid.). Curme (1935, also) writes on the other hand:

The speaker uses the past tense [preterit] when he speaks in a lively tone with a vivid impression of the past in his mind, i.e. with his mind still turned to the past. He employs the present perfect when he speaks in a calmer, more detached tone... (p. 322)
Chapter 3

INDEFINITE PAST THEORY

3.1. Our focus in the next pages will be upon what I have dubbed the "indefinite past" theory of the perfect, in its various subvarieties. The common element here is the claim that the present perfect locates events somewhere before the moment of coding, without pointing to any particular occasion or subsection of the past. The time-reference of the perfect is thus indefinite. The preterit, on the other hand, narrows down the temporal frame of the prior event to some (in principle) well-defined segment, in a manner comparable to the use of a definite noun phrase which singles out some particular referent from all those that might be referred to in a given context. A parallel is drawn between the indefiniteness of verbal expressions like he has returned and nominals like somebody; similarly between he returned and the boss in definiteness.

The cornerstone of ID theory is not, however, the indirect comparison with nominal definiteness. It is rather the relationship between tense forms and the adverbial expressions which may accompany them, for adverbs fall out into certain subclasses which are to some extent mutually exclusive, and which can be characterized as "definite" or as "indefinite" adverbs. To take a simple example, the adverb yesterday denotes a pretty specific time in the past with respect to a particular MOC, and it goes with the preterit but not the perfect:
he returned yesterday, *he has returned yesterday. Contrarywise, the adverb by now shows the opposite pattern: he has returned by now, but not *he returned by now. There are, to be sure, many adverbs which appear with either tense (he returned today, he has returned today), but ID theorists regard them as being of variable definiteness, and thus not problematic for their theory.

For us, the debate will center upon two quite distinct areas. The first is the definition of "definiteness" itself. I will argue that definite reference, as ordinarily understood, entails that the referent be one or more discreet entities—that they have relatively clear boundaries. Furthermore, definite reference entails that the entities referred to be "known" to the interlocutors, in the sense of being unambiguously fixed within the context of communication. There are, I believe, important cases where one or the other of these requirements is not met, yet the preterit appears unexceptionable. Other cases present themselves where definite reference is achieved, yet it is the perfect that appears. The line of argument will be to show that definiteness is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for the choice of tense-form.

The second area of debate concerns the actual mechanics of setting up tense-system models incorporating features based on oppositions of definiteness. Several models will be examined which develop an array of "reference points", "axes", and other structural elements, wherein definiteness plays an important part, and is not limited to the preterit-perfect duo. It will be seen that these models are more elaborate and explicit than the CR models we looked at in the last
chapter, yet when we press them closely, certain paradoxes and inconsistencies emerge which vitiate their neat arrangements of tenses. We are forced either to reject these models, or to interpret them in a manner quite different from that intended by their originators.

It may be well at this point to make it clear that I do not consider ID theory to be way off base. I have, at several points, offered an interpretation of the preterit/perfect opposition in terms of a contrast between "past over- and- gone" and "past still continuing", or roughly "then" vs. "extended now". I will expand on this contrast in the next chapter, but for now it is sufficient to acknowledge that quite a good many cases exhibiting such an opposition may also be viewed in terms of definiteness; the way ID oppositions are rationalized by the various writers shows certain similarities with the language we use in talking about then/extended now. On top of which, a lot of favorite preterit-taking adverbs are arguably definite in meaning. Yet we must not mistake points of similarity for functional equivalence. One of the attractions of ID theory was that it made use of an already established linguistic property—definiteness—to explain a tense-choice. But in order to make it work, substantial modifications are necessary. These modifications take us away from straightforward, "pure" ID theory toward a theory of the kind I discuss in the subsequent chapter.
3.2. There are many questions about the meaning of "definiteness", questions which have led to long and elaborate debates among linguists and philosophers. How do we know when to use the definite article and other markers of definiteness? What kinds of indefiniteness are there? This is not the place for a full expose, but let us consider one fairly strong statement of the purported parallelism between nominal and verbal definiteness, as couched in terms of a comparison between the uses of the definite article and the preterit. Allen (1966) proposes that "for each of the uses of the definite article the... (except the 'generic' use), there appears to be a parallel use of the 'past' morpheme [-d]" (p. 155). He proceeds to enumerate them (pp. 155-56):

(a) 'anticipatory' the as in the book on the table where the book anticipates the "following identifying phrase" on the table. In Did you go downtown yesterday?, the preterit anticipates the "identifying" adverbial yesterday.

(b) "unique" the (my name, Allen doesn't provide one), where the nominal referent is identified "by virtue of the fact that there is (or was) only one such person or thing", as in the Pope. This compares with Napoleon died on St. Helena, which is identified because "only one such Event ever took place."

(c) "mutual" the, for referents now present but "recognized by both speaker and hearer because of common or shared experience", as when two students in a class speak of the teacher. The "mutual" preterit refers to a past event similarly recognized: I am glad we did it when we did.

(d) "immediate" the, whose referent is in "the immediate environment at the moment of speaking", as when mentioning, in a classroom, the blackboard. Likewise, What did you say? can refer to an event "that took place in the immediate past."

(e) "anaphoric" the, referring back to a nominal already introduced, as in I see a cat. The cat is lying on the window sill. The analogous preterit refers to
an event already reported, commonly in the perfect:
(I've been to the Guggenheim Museum only once.) How
did you like it?

These parallels have a certain plausibility, but they do not tell the
whole story. At a superficial level, we may want to question the
justification of "unique" the, since it seems a contemporary of the
erstwhile Emperor might well have said Napoleon has died on St. Helena,
referring to the same unique event as expressed by the preterit in
Allen's example. We may also question whether "mutual" and "immediate"
the's are really distinct from each other, since both are concerned
with the context of speaking; in fact, this could be said of "unique"
the as well, though the referents of the latter are normally the same
from context to context (compare the moon), but not absolutely so
(the Pope of that era..., the moon of planet X...). "Anticipatory" and
"anaphoric" the can both be said to refer to entities made explicit
in the linguistic context. Thus the types of the usage are really
based on somewhat arbitrary distinctions among kinds of contexts in which
they are embedded.²

Generalizing, we saw the use of the definite nominal in any
given case is "good" to the extent that one can answer, in that par-
ticular context, the question "What particular entity are we talking
about?" Where such particularization is premature, or unimportant, we
may employ the indefinite article, or otherwise leave reference
inexact. There are of course many refinements to be made in a theory
of reference.³ For instance, in I wouldn't want to be the last man on
earth, it appears that the description contained in the nominal is the
only information we have about the referent; since that referent
doesn't presently exist as described, neither speaker or hearer can "know" who he is. In this case, however, the description (in Russell's terms, an "open" description) is enough.\textsuperscript{4}

But let us grant Allen's schema has general validity as far as noun phrases. The deeper level of criticism I wish to pursue requires directing our attention to the types of things represented in the definite noun phrases, to see how they compare with the "things" represented as past times in the preterit tense. Allen's examples of the book, the Pope, the teacher are readily distinguished entities in the real world; they are referred to as wholes--though they have parts--and have clear boundaries from other entities of the same (potential) type, that is, other books, other Popes, etc. What about yesterday? Well, yesterday has bounds to be sure, and it is not likely to be confused with other days with respect to the moment of coding, but it really stands for an entire set of times. Events can be said to have happened yesterday if they happened at any of the subtimes (including subperiods as well as "moments") which are within the limits of yesterday. In the example Did you go downtown yesterday?, the time of going downtown is not understood as all and only the set of times constituting yesterday; it is rather equivalent to Did you go downtown sometime during yesterday? In consequence of this, if we call yesterday a "definite" adverb, then it is definite not in the sense of affording us an exact knowledge of the time(s) corresponding to the event of going, but instead as a "definite frame" which is assigned to the time(s) of interest by the speaker.\textsuperscript{5}

If this is accepted, we can examine certain relations between

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temporal adverbs and the tenses they cooccur with, with a view to showing that definiteness is not an adequate classifier for separating the preterit from the present perfect.

3.3. First off, let us consider the moment of coding itself: it is about as well-defined a time as we normally encounter. True, it is not permanently fixed in the way calendrical times like October 5, 1944 are; but then neither are expressions such as yesterday or last week, which are always among those classed by ID theorists as "definite". Now if last Friday and yesterday represent definite times, then the period between them should also be definite: from last Friday through yesterday. And it should also, correspondingly, cooccur with the preterit, which it does. But now if the MOC is definite, then from last Friday up till right now should be definite as well—yet such a phrase goes not with the preterit, but with the perfect, the so-called "indefinite past" tense:

From last Friday up till now, I have had nothing but problems.

*From last Friday up till now, I had nothing but problems.

Either we must make some ad-hoc distinction between two senses of "definiteness", or we must admit that a separate descriptor is required, which may be quite independent of definiteness.

We can produce another argument by considering those adverbs

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which normally require the preterit, and indeed seem to exclude the perfect altogether:

I went back to visit two months ago.
*I have gone back to visit two months ago.

I went back to visit last weekend.
*I have gone back to visit last weekend.

I went back to visit just yesterday.
*I have gone back to visit just yesterday.

The interesting thing is that we can combine all these adverbs by taking them to be explicitly or implicitly subsumed in an overall period which extends (at least) up to the MOC, and the perfect is perfectly good!

I have gone back to visit two months ago, last weekend, and just yesterday (so far).

The individual times remain as well-defined as they ever were—they are not somehow made "indefinite" individually. And in accordance with my earlier claim that the MOC is itself definite, the overall period can't be the locus of indefiniteness either. (Note that the overall period need not include the present: we can also choose to say I went back... two months ago, last weekend, and just yesterday.)

Next, consider the fact that adverbs like never, ever, always, which on the face of it seem to be "indefinite" ("never at any time"), occur with both the perfect and the preterit:

I never learned how to swim in my youth.
I have never learned how to swim yet.

If the preterit is definite, then never must be definite too. (A secondary question which we will return to concerns adverbs like
in my youth: is it fair to call them "definite"?) But if "preterit never" is definite, so is "perfect never", since as I argued, the period never-yet-so-far is scarcely less well-defined. One might say that the latter period is "open-ended" and therefore unbounded and indefinite. But never yet does not refer to future time, only to that part of time which comes up to now.

While we're at it, we should remark that many preterit-taking, "definite" adverbs are in fact entirely indefinite, in respect to the terms we discussed earlier for definite noun phrases. If someone says things aren't like they were in the old days, it seems unlikely that we are to understand the old days to be referring to a period of time that has clear boundaries separating it from other periods, and that these boundaries are identifiable by the interlocutors. Bryan (1936) offers

European civilization originated on the shores of the Mediterranean and for long ages existed only in the lands bordering upon this great inland sea. (pp. 364–65)

where there is no question of for long ages being definitely fixed.

It will be recalled that one of the ways in which a noun phrase could be definite was by "referring back" to a previously mentioned thing. This was "anaphoric" the. When the referents are different, the second remains indefinite: He saw a bear. She saw a (different) bear. If the bear is the same, we must definitize the second noun phrase: She saw the bear (too). In the case of adverbs, pro-forming is not as obligatory, but normally we would expect

John left before five, and Bill left before five too.

to become

John left before five, and Bill left then too.
on the understanding that the actual times of departure were the same. This is typical of what Geis (1970) called "instantive" adverbials. "Frame" adverbials, on the other hand, work differently. Comparing

Richard left on Monday, and Mary left on Monday too.

Richard left on Monday, and Mary left then too.

she notices that Richard and Mary may have left at entirely different times—but both within the frame of "Monday". Geis proposes that

\text{before five} has the underlying structure AT TIME \(x\) \text{BEFORE FIVE}, but \text{on Monday} is represented with no underlying AT-phrase. Then will take the place of \text{before five} only on condition that the two \(x\)'s are the same, but this constraint does not apply to \text{on Monday}; we could say, it suffices that the two \text{MONDAY}'s be the same. Since the speaker need not even know the actual times of Mary's and Richard's departures, we cannot claim that \text{then} refers to definite event-times. Then specifies only the outer limits of those event-times, that is, the "chunks" of time within which they fall. This is a rather different sense of definiteness than is applied ordinarily to nominal referents.\(^7\) But why is this fact especially important? Let's follow the argument out. If \text{Monday} is definite, it seems that \text{yesterday} would also be definite, in the same way. And if the \text{yesterday}-chunk of time is definite, then surely the \text{today}-chunk is just as definite. Yet \text{today} can appear with the perfect:

Richard has left today, and Mary has left today too.

(Failure of the second \text{today} to pronominalize as \text{then} does not argue that the "today" frame is indefinite; \text{then} makes past frames.) If definiteness of the containing time-chunk, that is, the "period within
which" is what we mean when we talk about the definiteness of preterit-taking adverbs, then we must somehow count today and other MOC-including adverbs exceptions. On Monday will normally go with the preterit, while today may freely go with the perfect. The definiteness characterization of adverbs does not tell us why this should be the case.

While we are on the subject of coreference, we might take a look at a case where the perfect seems to function anaphorically:

I've called up my brother several times, but he's been too drunk to talk every one of those times.

If coreference is a sufficient condition of definiteness (which is generally agreed), then he's been drunk should count as a definite verb form.

Remembering two other types of definiteness in Allen's list which both have to do with contextual familiarity of the referents ("immediate" and "mutual" the), we might expect that when an event is part of almost everybody's recollection, and is hardly to be mistaken as to temporal location, the use of the preterit might almost be obligatory. Defromont (1973, p. 28) points out that the situational contexts of both utterances below is almost certain to include full knowledge by the interlocutors of the precise details, yet the perfect is chosen rather than the preterit:

The Egyptian leader (Nasser) has died at a most awkward moment for the Russians, who were trying to consolidate their position in the area.

...I should not like to say that this tragedy has occurred at a particularly unfortunate time. It would be a most improper thought. Nevertheless...

Apparently the ID theorist would have to say that the speakers here are talking as if the event-times were unknown (at least to the speaker),
or else irrelevant to the conversation. But we don't seem to have this option in using definiteness with noun phrases--why do we have it with tenses?

Finally, let us return to the contrasting pattern of adverbs that go with the respective verb forms. Both the demonstratives this and that are usually definite; they contribute definiteness by pointing at one of two or more objects distinguishable by position but otherwise not differentiated by the remainder of the noun phrase: this man, not that man. Let us insert these two into an example:

(I've cut my hand again!)

Well, where have you cut it this time?
*Well, where have you cut it that time?

Given the equal degree of definiteness attributable to this and that, we should expect neither to participate in adverbs collocated with the perfect. The fact that there is an opposition between this and that is highly suggestive of an opposition between the "nearer" and the "farther" past, the past which is "with us" and the past which is "done with". I will elaborate on this theme in the next chapter.

3.4. In the preceding paragraphs, we have assumed that while the temporal loci of events may be vague, the events themselves are always "placeable". This turns out not to be the case, however. With many kinds of events it is hard to supply even an approximate time-frame,
much less a definite one, because of the nature of the events themselves. We may say that an event of this type has not yet happened, or is presently happening, or has already happened, or happened long ago; but we cannot identify starting or stopping points—we cannot strictly answer the question "when?" Examples are events like

growing old
getting to know someone
turning sour

We can identify these events as having happened after the dust has settled, but can map them only loosely onto time-periods. We commonly assign rough time-references to them; but it seems unlikely that even this is required for us to use the preterit. Do we want to claim that Man descended from the apes, so they say, embodies a "definite" time-reference? I doubt it.

Even an ordinary statement like I overslept this morning is problematical, if we concern ourselves about "defining" the time of the event. We can hardly say "At 9:01 this morning I overslept; neither was the oversleeping a morning-long project. For that matter, this morning is but roughly defined: we must understand something like "during that period of the morning which constitutes the gradual transition between ON TIME and LATE, I slipped into the LATE part".

Then are we saying anything less definite in I've overslept this morning? We could argue that this is actually more definite in its time reference, since if the morning is not yet over (still "now"), the possible time-frame of oversleeping is relatively less than the
whole morning--whatever that period constitutes to the speaker.

Thus far, we have busied ourselves about establishing certain difficulties with ID theory without appeal to individual proponents of the theory other than Allen. This reflects, in part, the fact that the theory is generally not pushed on the basis of a careful comparison with other patterns of definiteness. The concern of most proponents, as we shall shortly see, is for placing a definiteness parameter within the framework of an entire tense-matrix, where it may reflect certain properties of the way tenses provide each other with "reference points" in the establishment of event-sequences. This does not mean, however, that ID theorists have been blind to the problems of reconciling a definiteness parameter with adverbial cooccurrences; Allen himself observes in a footnote:

A peculiar use of HAVE in verb-clusters referring to times that are not really "indefinite" is to be found in its use with the middle adverb just, as in I've just seen Mr. Puddleditch. Some form of HAVE seems also to be almost obligatory with certain time-expressions like by now, by then, since two years ago, etc. Have is regularly used with already when it means 'at some unidentified time before now' (but the use of the preterit with already seems to be increasing in the United States... (p. 157)

It is certainly true that just narrows the time-range considerably, and is not entirely indefinite; yet it takes the perfect. By now seems to fill the bill as a definite "time-frame" in the sense discussed earlier, yet is one of the adverbs par excellence of the perfect.

Already, when used with the preterit, is scarcely more definite than when with the perfect. The increment of specificity may be nothing more than the difference between a reference period which includes the
MOC, and one which stops just short of it, corresponding respectively to the perfect and the preterit.

The weakness of ID theory in this area was confronted as long ago as Pickbourn (1789), who nevertheless contrived to slip around it:

...it may be objected [to the definiteness thesis], that when we ascribe...actions to a person deceased, we say, 'in the last forty years of his life he wrote many letters, essays, and treatises, on various subject; some of which he printed in separate volumes; others he published in magazines; a few appeared in newspapers; but he destroyed, by i.e.r, the greatest part of them.' And it may be added, that the dates of the several actions are not more determined in this, than in the former case [viz. the same example couched in the perfect]. This is acknowledged. But the difference is, that in one case the tenses are capable of ascertaining the dates, and in the other case they are not capable of it. In the latter instance, the precise time of every action may be specified by only adding the date, without changing the tense of the verb, but in the former, it cannot. (p. 61)

So the preterit does not make past events "more determined" on its own, it only makes it possible to determine them without changing verb forms. But what does this mean? What actual basis would the speaker have for choosing between forms if he intends to make no adverbial refinements? It would be possible to say that the preterit represents a past unmarked for definiteness, whereas the perfect is the marked indefinite past. If the preterit happens to be joined by an indefinite adverb, it becomes, so to speak, derivationally or associatively indefinite. The perfect differs only in that its indefiniteness is "inherent". But this distinction is presumably irrelevant for the interpretation of sentences. Perfects and "indefinite" preterits should be interchangeable. No matter where temporal indefiniteness comes from, it should have the same meaning in both forms--unless we wish to take the extra step of making a three-way distinction among DEFINITE/INDEFINITE₁/INDEFINITE₂. In
point of fact, something like this would be necessary to prevent "indefinite preterit" adverbs from crossing the line into the perfect (or vice versa) on the assumption that preterit adverbs are not the same set as perfect-taking adverbs. Once we admit a three-way distinction, however, we destroy the initially attractive parallelism with DEFINITE/INDEFINITE oppositions found elsewhere in the grammar, and call into question the validity of the comparison.

Similar considerations led Bryan (1936) to reject any inherent difference of definiteness; addressing the pair of examples John has been punished many times/John was punished many times (taken from Curme) he remarks that

any greater definiteness of statement with the preterite was punished is due to the added adverbial element last year. If a similar modifier is added to the statement with the perfect verb, the statement becomes fully as definite as that with the preterite--"John has been punished many times this week"; and if the modifier is omitted from the statement with the preterite, it becomes fully as indefinite as that with the perfect--"John was punished many times." (p. 377)

We will return to Bryan in the following chapter, where we will examine more closely the behavior of adverbs relative to the tenses of interest to us. His arguments agree with those I have made in the preceding pages in suggesting that definiteness comes into consideration only as a secondary, and fundamentally incidental, feature of the verbal opposition. It happens that many of the examples used by grammarians to illustrate the opposition are filled out with adverbs that may be evaluated in terms of definiteness. These heighten the contrast, to be sure, but they also attract the spotlight to definiteness. Such a shift is understandable, but still, I believe, a mistake.9

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3.5. It is now time to turn our attention to the second main question about ID theory, the one concerned with the place of definiteness oppositions within full-blown models of the English tense system including all its members. These models largely grow out of attempts to establish a priori what possible temporal relationships between events there are, and then to map these relationships onto the actually occurring forms of English. Diver (1963) is something of an exception in that he tries to let the forms fall out where they will without forcing them into a strictly symmetrical arrangement; we will look at him later. Other scholars attempt to deal one way or another with the fact that not all possible objective event-order relationships are explicitly realized in the formal system of English grammar—there are various points where semantic distinctions are "collapsed" or neutralized. The perfect gets analyzed within the entire set of available verb forms (including grammaticalized periphrases), though there may be some ambivalence as to whether it is a "real tense" like the preterit, the present, etc. Typically, a relationship with the preterit is set up which can be represented as follows:

(a) the PRESENT PERFECT expresses an event prior to the present reference point (the time of coding)

(b) the PRETERIT expresses an event simultaneous with a past reference point.

I view this kind of relationship as a variation on ID theory for reasons that will emerge.

Let us posit, to begin with, a rather straightforward, "naive" conception of temporal relationships, based on the idea that
By the essence of time itself, or at any rate by a necessity of our thinking, we are obliged to figure to ourselves time as having one dimension only, thus capable of being represented as a straight line. The main divisions accordingly may be arranged...[so] that time is divided into two parts, the past and the future, the point of division being the present moment... Under each of the two divisions of infinite time we may refer to some point as lying either before or after the main point of which we are actually speaking... The subordinate "times" are thus orientated with regard to some point in the past...and in the future...exactly as the main times...are orientated with regard to the present moment. (Jespersen, 1931, pp. 1-2)

This gives us a system of primary time-references: present, past, and future; and a set of secondary or derived time-references, which Jespersen calls the before-past, the after-past, the before-future, and the after-future. These suffice, in Jespersen's system, for the explanation of the English verb system.

But is the set of time-references given entirely adequate? In fact, the system seems to contain more terms than necessary. If we take the relations "before" and "after" as basic, we can replace the terms "past" and "future" with "before present" and "after present", respectively. Or alternatively, we could take "before-past" and substitute "past-past"; likewise "before-future" would become "past-future", i.e. "past of the future". To make these modifications, all that is necessary is to treat the present reference-point (the NOC) as an element separable from the relation-functions. There is a question as to whether it is necessary or theoretically valuable to interpret "past" as embedding the present-reference, while "before" does not embed other, non-present references. This we will consider shortly. One possible argument in support of Jespersen's system might be that a "past" time-reference is not really the same as a "before-present" one.
If we think in terms of the ordering relationships "simultaneous", "after", and "before", then the present tense would be interpretable as "event simultaneous with the present", the past as "event simultaneous with a past time", and the future as "event simultaneous with a future time." In contrast, a "before-present" relation does not link the present with a particular point (or period) in the past, and so is not equivalent to "event simultaneous with a past time". This could provide a basis for distinguishing the preterit (simultaneous with past) from the present perfect (merely before the present). Essentially this approach is taken by the ID theorists we will study below. The issue is whether or not such an approach is successful.

3.6. Reichenbach (1947) developed a system in which every tense is composed of three elements: a speech act, an event, and a "reference point". It is easiest to see how they work by considering the past perfect:

From a sentence like 'Peter had gone' we see that the time order expressed in the tense does not concern one event, but two events, whose positions are determined with respect to the point of speech. We shall call these time points the point of the event and the point of reference. In the example the point of the event is the time when Peter went; the point of reference is a time between this point and the point of speech. In an individual sentence like the one given it is not clear which time point is used as the point of reference. This determination is rather given by the context of speech. (p. 286)

It is not hard to see how the past perfect "goes back" two levels or
degrees from the present: it points to time which is before a time before now—"at some time in the past, Peter had already gone." The novelty of Reichenbach's approach is that it identifies even the "simple" tenses with three-place temporal reference; only the three points are not separate:

In some tenses, two of the three points are simultaneous. Thus, in the simple past, the point of the event and the point of reference are simultaneous, and both are before the point of speech... This distinguishes the simple past from the present perfect. In the statement 'I have seen Charles' the event is also before the point of speech, but it is referred to a point simultaneous with the point of speech; i.e., the points of speech and reference coincide... We see that we need three time points even for the distinction of tenses which, in a superficial consideration, seem to concern only two time points. The difficulties which grammar books have in explaining the meanings of the different tenses originate from the fact that they do not recognize the three-place structure of the time determination given in the tenses. (pp. 289-90)

In Reichenbach's graphic representation,

\[
\begin{align*}
E &= \text{point of the event} \\
R &= \text{point of reference} \\
S &= \text{point of speech}
\end{align*}
\]

and time is ordered left-to-right from past to present across dashes, but commas represent simultaneity:

- I see John. \quad S,R,E
- I saw John \quad R,E--S
- I have seen John. \quad E--S,R
- I had seen John. \quad E--R--S

Reichenbach says that when temporal determiners are added, they apply not to the event, but to the reference point of the verb phrase. This is necessary to provide for the correct adverb cooccurrences, as
Now I see John.
Now I have seen John.
I saw John yesterday.
I had seen John yesterday.

But here we have run into our first problem. Since the present and present perfect both have their reference points simultaneous with their speech points, the adverbs going with either should be the same, but not so: I have recently seen John versus *I recently see John. We have met this problem before, and will again.

Now since only the reference point takes temporal determiners, whenever event point and reference point are not simultaneous, the event cannot be determined. When they are simultaneous, the event can be determined by association with the reference point, which is directly determined. Here we see how Reichenbach fits in with ID theorists: the perfect can never be determined, while the preterit can.

The distinction applies not only to past events, but to future ones too. Now I shall go is identified as $S,R\rightarrow E$ while I shall go tomorrow is $S\rightarrow R,E$ (p. 295). This may be compared with Allen’s (1966) suggestion that

The difference between these two sentences [just given] seems to be primarily the difference between reference to a non-identified time in the future and reference to an identified time in the future. In other words, English does not distinguish formally between a "definite" future and an "indefinite" future as it does between a "definite" past and an "indefinite" past. (p. 158)

It is unfortunate for this neat dichotomy, however, that we can say things like Now I shall go tomorrow, for sure, which would seem to be both definite and indefinite.

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Since we decided to devote some discussion to the adequacy of the general tense-frameworks being proposed, it is not amiss to point out some other problems with Reichenbach's scheme. One thing we notice right away is that with the three independent components $S$, $R$, and $E$ to work with, it is possible to construct a number of rather outlandish formulas for which we would not expect any grammatical realization—at least none distinct from more "normal" realizations. An example would be $S,E--R$ (speech and event points the same, but reference point in the future), which semantically contrasts with $S--E--R$ (event will take place before some future reference, but subsequent to speaking) and with $E--S--R$ (event is in speaker's past, but the reference point lies in the future). All of these meanings are in fact realized by the future perfect (Reichenbach's term is "anterior future"). In a similar manner, the "posterior past" (there seems to be no standard traditional term) as in (he said) he would come stands for any of $R--S,E$ or $R--E--S$ or $R--S--E$ (cf. p. 297). The problem with this abundance of point-orderings is that English nowhere makes use of them, nowhere has a set of grammatical forms for just these distinctions. (Nor, it seems, does any language that comes to mind.) Reichenbach's theory thus implies a systematic richness which outstrips the actual resources of the language.

Beyond the oddness of formulas like $S,E--R$ or $R--S,E$, the important question here is how to reflect the fact that English pays no grammatical attention to the following lexically-realized differences:

(He said) he would come before now. (i.e., before my saying this.)
(He said) he would come now.
(He said) he would come after now.

Or any similar set of oppositions (He will say he has come before now, etc.). If, say, at some time in the past an event lay in the future, we cannot register whether that future is still future with respect to the moment of reporting, or coincides with it, or is past, without resorting to adverbial supplements.

There are other problems. If Reichenbach's system is not sufficiently constrained at some points, it is too limited at others. If we take it that by last Tuesday is the adverb of a reference point in I was sure he would have received the letter by last Tuesday at the latest, then we seem to need four time-points to work with, rather than three:

the present (S): IT IS THE CASE THAT
the past with respect to the present (R₁) I WAS SURE THAT
the future with respect to that past point (R₂) HE WOULD
the past with respect to that future point (E) HAVE RECEIVED

A like number of points are embodied in I shall have been going to see John, an example given by Prior (1967, p. 13), who supplies the formula S--R₂--E--R₁. To Prior, such examples point to the artificiality of distinguishing the speech-point from other reference-points:

it becomes unnecessary and misleading to make such a sharp distinction between the point or points of reference and the point of speech; the point of speech is just the first point of reference. (p. 13)

If this is granted, then Reichenbach's manner of distinguishing the preterit from the present perfect becomes suspect. In what sense could we speak of the "simultaneity" of the point of speech (R₁) with some
other reference point \( (R_2) \), except as an artifact of description? Pastness and futurity are relative to a point of reference, whatever it be. The only remaining distinction between preterit and perfect is whether or not the event time \( E \) is "simultaneous" with another time \( R_2 \) which lies before \( R_1 \), the moment of speech, that is, in the past. If no \( R_2 \) is involved, then we have the perfect.

But even this difference is dubious. Reichenbach has not stipulated that events expressed in the perfect tense do not occur at a time prior to the speech event; indeed this would be nonsense. Every event is simultaneous with some time; to happen means to become present at some time. (Cf. Prior, p. 15) Hence the lack of an \( R_2 \) with the perfect must not be taken literally to refer to an objective lack of a moment of realization. Instead, it makes sense only if interpreted in an indirect sense to mean "simultaneity with a time singled out in the discourse from other times". But this is quite a different matter from the differential ordering of three ever-present points of reference, \( S, E, \) and \( R \), which is what Reichenbach relies on.\(^{11}\) In the end it seems that if Reichenbach's theory can be interpreted at all, it is only as a variant of ID theory.
3.7. Bull (1960) presents an attempt to build a system of tense analysis which will reflect the actual range of ordering relationships among events which are found in human languages. To the familiar past, present, and future reference-points, which Bull terms "axes", he adds a separate axis for events which were anticipated at a past time, i.e. were future at a past time:

If RP [Retrospective Point] can be recalled at PP [Prime Point] and if AP [Anticipated Point] can be anticipated from PP, then total recall would be impossible unless one could remember at PP that he once anticipated an axis from RP. This retrospective anticipated axis, which will be symbolized as RAP, is the fourth axis needed to complete the hypothetical tense system. (p. 23)

Given these four axes, an event can be located by means of a "vector" from one of the axes; a vector is an ordering relationship with respect to an axis, viz. anterior, simultaneous, or posterior, represented as -V, OV, and +V respectively. With E standing for an event, the tenses are laid out schematically as:

```
E(PP-V) ——— E(PPOV) ——— E(PP+V)  
has sung    sings       will sing

E(AP-V) ——— E(APOV) ——— E(AP+V)  
will have sung  Ø      Ø

E(RP-V) ——— E(RPOV) ——— E(RP+V)  
had sung    sang       would sing

E(RAP-V) ——— E(RAPOV) ——— E(RAP+V)  
would have sung  Ø      Ø
```

It is to be noted that Bull does not place all the axes in relation to each other on the same time-line:

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It is true that RP, which is recalled, is always anterior to PP, while AP, which is anticipated at PP, is always posterior to PP and, therefore, to RP. These three axes are, then, serial and sequent and may be identified with the three concepts of order. This identification, nevertheless, is fallacious. It is based on the assumption that a system containing only three factors can be used to describe a system containing four. RAP, obviously cannot be explained in terms of a direct relationship to PP...RAP may be anterior to PP, actually identical with PP, or posterior to PP. The vector system can be understood only by returning to the axiom that events, like points on a line in space, can be meaningfully organized only in terms of one axis of orientation at a time.

He illustrates:

In recollection, the act of recalling is PP and the event recalled is oriented directly to PP. If the recalled event, however, is actually an event which was once PP but is now RP, then it serves in recollection as the prime axis of orientation around which all possible events are now organized. The abstract fact that an event posterior to RP may be anterior to PP is now totally irrelevant...All this means, to be brief, that the position of RAP relative to PP cannot be defined. Once the speaker has moved from PP to RP in recollection, PP ceases to be a relevant entity. (pp. 23-24)

Bull is attempting to deal with the problem which we discussed in connection with Reichenbach: we do not want our theoretical tense system to imply that certain distinctions are available, but that they never happen to be used in languages. Reichenbach would allow three "meanings" for he will have sung, differing in whether the event of singing is located before the moment of speaking, simultaneous with it, or in the speaker's future. Bull is quite right in saying that this requires tense reference oriented to two separate axes at the same time, and that this is something no (known) human language does.

He will have sung:

```
Axis 1          Axis 2
PP -- RP -- AP  will

RP -- RP       have sung
```

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However, it is rather a drastic step to keep all axes entirely independent of each other. We will consider the consequences below.

First of all, Bull indulges in some sleight-of-hand in the statement "once the speaker has moved from PP to RP in recollection, PP ceases to be a relevant entity"; for in fact the forms which the speaker uses in "moving from" PP to RP do mark the "trip"—they indicate that the retrospective reference point is retrospective with respect to another point, namely the PP. The only way PP could be entirely eliminated would be to simply couch statements as being about PP, as if the past were the present. But ordinarily, He said he would go and He said he will go are understood to be different reports. Bull is quite right that would go only indicates posteriority to the past reference (said), without positively indicating posteriority to the present reference. But the present reference still appears in the very fact of choosing the "back-shifted" would for an original will.

There are problems concerning Bull's choice of a structural slot for a given form. The form will sing is put only in the E(PP+V) slot, but I don't see why it could not justifiably be put in the E(APOV) slot, which stands empty. Of course this would destroy the separateness of axes, but it is not clear that complete separation is desirable anyway. Similarly, would sing would go in both E(RP+V) and E(ARPOV). In this way, we would reduce the oddity of having two axes (AP and RAP) where there is never any verb form to fill two of the three slots, including the "prime" slots APOV and RAPOV. Despite Bull's attempt to avoid Reichenbach's overrich symbolism, some of the same excess appears in Bull's unfilled slots.
A related problem is that since Bull has included a "compound" axis RAP, we could also imagine an axis defined as ARP, that is, a point that will be looked back on (viewed retrospectively) at some time in the future. Such a meaning seems to be one of the regular senses of the future perfect, as in He will have bought a new suit on Saturday, so he'll probably want to go out on Sunday. This would presumably realize E(ARPOV), just as if we could say *he will bought—a "future preterit". Bull's system does not rule out an ARP axis; it merely does not happen to include it.12

Notice that while has sung is on the same axis as sings, and had sung is in line with sang, the form will have sung is on a different axis from will sing, and would have sung is separated from would sing. This asymmetry seems unjustified.

Bull's schema makes had sung realize only E(RP-V). But as we know, the past perfect is also generated by "back-shifting" or embedding preterits in the past: Marsha graduated last Friday becomes, via second-hand report, I was told Marsha had graduated the Friday before. This would make it E(RRPOV)—the axis being a point viewed retrospectively from a point viewed retrospectively from the present. Furthermore, even past perfects sometimes appear in back-shifted contexts, and we have to decide whether to identify an underlying third level of pastness (RRRP), or to provide for "wiping out" such distinctions at the time of embedding. (We will return to this matter later on.)

The point of all the above criticisms is to suggest that Bull's tactic of separating all the axes one from the other, to avoid the "double-axis" problem we found in Reichenbach, brings with it a certain
artificiality of its own. There is a complete blindness to certain
connections that do hold between axes. This suggests that associating
the preterit and the present perfect with different axes may be, at
least in part, a misrepresentation.

Let us focus more closely on these latter two tenses. Bull's
+ and - vectors apparently do not point at specific times, they only
point away from their particular axes.\textsuperscript{13} The 0 vector, in contrast,
always has its own definite axis to point to. This is a rather curious
thing. As we noted in discussing Jespersen, the functions "prior to
the present" and "at a past time" are entirely equivalent—unless we
bring in factors like the definiteness of the "prior" and "past" times.
(If it would, of course, be possible to argue that the two functions express
different assertions, as CR theorists did, and are only implicationally
equivalent. Since Bull does not attempt this, we will not take him in
this line.) If we revise Bull's + and - vectors to allow them refer-
ence to definite times, just like the 0 vector, there is clearly no
difference left but the vector directions. Or, with complete equivalence,
we could allow the 0 vector to operate on indefinite times: the perfect
would then correspond to "an event simultaneous with an indefinite time
in the past". In either case, Bull's system turns out to be a variation
of ID theory.\textsuperscript{14} The terminology is different from Reichenbach, yet the
result is much the same, in at least this particular regard.
3.8. At this juncture we will return to Allen (1966), who provides a potential argument for characterizing the preterit as a "definite past" independent of a direct comparison with the perfect. The argument is based on his analysis of the way subordinate clauses depend on their superordinate clauses within a temporal hierarchy. Allen's basic schema of tenses is strongly reminiscent of Bull's, except that it rejects the future from the ranks of major reference points (Bull's axes) on the ground that it is not very well integrated into the verb system, and is also rare in the corpus Allen works from (p. 150). What Bull called an "axis", Allen calls a "time-reference": they are "past" and "present". What Bull called a "vector", Allen terms a "time-relationship-reference": these are "earlier time", "same time", and "later time".

The distinction between time-reference and time-relationship-reference is crucial: verb forms expressing time-relationship are not to be construed as referring to any specific time except in so far as the time-relationship which they show with reference to an identified time "places" them in time. The significance of this may be seen from a sentence like [Tom said that he would come some time next week] where the time expression next week shows that Tom's coming will take place after the moment of coding; the verb-cluster does not show this--it indicates only that the time of the coming is later than the time of Tom's speaking. (p. 165)

The reasoning here is sufficiently familiar from our discussion of Bull. Allen, however, goes on to generalize about matrix ("non-included") and adverbial subordinate ("included") clauses; for example,

A non-included preterit verb-cluster regularly "ties" with an already identified time which serves as a point of orientation...but included verb-clusters...regularly express time-relationship not with reference to the already identified time that provides the time-orientation for the whole passage, but with reference to the time of the clause or sentence within which the verb-cluster's own clause is included. (p. 166)
He offers the examples (p. 168):

(a) Percy said that he had listened to the radio while he ate supper.

(b) Percy said that he always listened to the radio while he ate supper.

(c) Percy said that he would listen to the radio while he ate supper.

In each case the time of ate is understood to be simultaneous with that which is referred to by the verb in the next higher clause; in (a), had listened refers to an event which preceded the event of saying: so does ate. In (b), ate is simultaneous with the simple past reference of listened, and would listen in (c) provides the "future from a past viewpoint" which is shared by ate. A similar relationship is evidenced by present tenses:

(d) Percy usually listens to the radio after he has eaten supper.

(e) But tonight he will go to bed after he has eaten supper.

(f) He will listen to the radio while he eats supper, instead.

(Ibid.) We can readily see why it is that "past" and "present" are taken as independent "orientation points" serving for the whole passage. Present and preterit are not distinguished from each other in both "taking off from" whatever reference point is provided by the higher clause. They differ in that they take off from different starting points, namely present and past time; otherwise there would be nothing to prevent the generation of

(g) *Percy said that he had listened to the radio while he eats supper.

(h) *Percy usually listens to the radio after he ate supper.
parallel to (a) and (d), respectively. If we posit that there is only
one basic orientation point, namely the moment of coding, and that
the past is defined as "before the MOC", then the preterit becomes an
exception to the embedding rule Allen has proposed, because each verb
of an embedded hierarchy of preterits would be "peeking out" of its
own clause and going straight to the MOC for its temporal root. In
sentence (b) above, both listened and ate are past with respect to the
MOC; ate is not past with respect to listened. Moreover, since ate
and listened are understood to refer to the same time, it is not
sufficient just to say that they were both "somewhere before" the MOC;
we need to be able to specify simultaneity, and this requires the times
to be identified, that is, definite. The simultaneity of time in (d),
on the other hand, is not between listening and eating, but between
listening and having eaten supper; the perfect works like a present
tense in this regard, so is accounted for as an "earlier time than the
MOC" marker (p. 159). The perfect is thus one of the "time-relationship"
markers which, as we saw, Allen says "are not to be construed as
referring to any specific time" outside of their own orientation-
point.16 From this, it is clear that we have a characteristically ID
sort of relationship between the preterit and the perfect.

Given the above exposition of Allen's position, it is time to
turn to a critique. Allen is himself aware of some areas in which his
theory is arbitrary or incomplete. For one thing,

the verb-cluster in the following sentence, for example,
could be analyzed as expressing time-relationship—that is,
as indicating "same time as the time shown by the identify-
ing time-expression six months ago": I gave Charlie a
check for those apple trees six months ago. (p. 165)
In fact, the preterit may indicate simultaneity with "a time already identified in an earlier sentence" or "a past time that both speaker and hearer know about" (ibid.), which correspond to ways in which noun phrases are identified (cf. Allen's description which we discussed earlier). This would make included clauses different only in that they have their temporal "antecedent" available in a clause immediately superjoined. And of course the "time-relationship" here is different from "earlier" and "later" relationships, which remain indefinite.

This brings us to another problem: if the perfect can never point or refer to a definite time, then it is theoretically incapable of permitting a preterit in the sentence embedded beneath it. We should be unable to generate *I've often stayed up as late as I wanted and many others like it*. Allen admits that this is not accounted for:

we would expect [the present] to signal the same time as the time of either have/has or will [defined only as "time later than MOC"]...[But] re-reference to an indefinite time signaled by have or has is expressed by means of [the preterit], so that "same time" as the time of have or has is signaled by a past verb form, not by [the present]... (p. 168)

The past perfect, expressing "indefinite time earlier than a definite past time", is also troublesome, for we know it appears as a "substitute" for an original preterit in indirect discourse. Allen in fact recognizes "back-shifting" in indirect speech as a kind of tense-agreement, citing (p. 171):

(i) *I'll go* to bed after *I've eaten* supper.

(j) *Percy said he'd go* to bed after *he'd eaten* supper.

But he does not seem to realize that the past perfect *he had eaten* is really a "past preterit" or "pluperfect", and does not fit with his
categorization of the past perfect among the (indefinite) time-relationship forms only.

There are other points which escape Allen's notice. It is possible to say

(k) Percy said that he had listened to the radio while he had eaten supper.

with little if any difference in meaning from (a) above. In Allen's theory, (k) should mean "the time after Percy's listening to the radio was also the time after his eating supper". This paraphrase fails to assert that the times of the respective events of listening and eating were the same, which is the actual message of (k), and of (a).

Notice also that we can reverse the tenses in (a) to produce an example that is tolerable, though slightly odd:

(1) ?Percy said that while he ate supper, he had listened to the radio.

which again is interpreted like (a), though had listened should refer to an event preceding ate, according to Allen.

Similar problems can be found in the explanation of the present perfect in the adverb clauses of (d) and (e), as well as the present-tense clause of (f). Allen considers it a merit of his system that the appearance of these forms is "actually what one should expect and not a violation of the rules of logic" as is often thought (p. 168). Certainly if the embedded present of (f) means "same time as time referred to by higher clause", then while he eats supper will be effectively future in virtue of the main clause he will listen. Likewise, after he has eaten supper will be reckoned from the present in (d) and from the future in (e). But what about:
(m) Percy has often listened to the radio while he has eaten supper.

Now the matrix perfect has listened cannot, in Allen's view, point to a particular time in the past; the only simultaneity possible to construe is between the two present orientation-points of has listened and has eaten. But this is surely not the communicative function of while (compare (k) above). It is supposed to be the events that are simultaneous, more or less— but this requires them to be determinable, i.e. definite, in Allen’s treatment.

I think part of the general problem is that Allen pretty much ignores the role of conjunctions and other elements in the structuring of temporal relationships, placing the entire burden on the fact of embedding itself. It is revealing to alter his examples (a)-(c) by replacing while with even though, which allows a "simultaneous" reading, but doesn't perform very well as a substitute.

(n) ?Percy said that he had listened to the radio even though he ate supper.

(o) ?Percy said that he always listened to the radio even though he ate supper.

(p) *Percy said that he would listen to the radio even though he ate supper.

Case (n) is improved by changing to he was eating; (o) works better with that or he would be eating; similarly with (p). The only point being made here is that if the sequence of verb forms were entirely rationalized by Allen's principle, we should not have to worry about such changes at all.

Allen's argument also makes (d), repeated here for convenience, entirely equivalent to (a), but then leaves (r) entirely out in the cold:

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(d) Percy usually listens to the radio after he has eaten supper.

(q) Percy usually listens to the radio when he has eaten supper.

(r) Percy usually listens to the radio before he has eaten supper.

Not to be forgotten, either, is the role of pragmatics in our relating events to each other. For instance, if we say When I sleep soundly, I usually snore, we normally understand the sleeping and snoring to be going on at the same time. But if we say When I sleep soundly, I do my work better, we think of the sleeping and working as alternating. This difference is not accommodated by Allen's theory.

The purpose of all this discussion has been to see if Allen's theory of tense-sequencing provided support for an ID model of the perfect/preterit opposition that was independent of direct semantic comparisons such as made by the ID theorists studied earlier. If tense-sequencing had proved to work out as Allen intended, we would have been forced to admit that there was some sense to the ID analysis after all, in spite of our previous rejection. However, we have found a number of deficiencies with Allen's explanation, which seems to work only for a limited variety of examples. Hence we judge that Allen has not substantiated an ID interpretation of tenses.

3.9. The last ID theory we shall consider in detail is Diver's (1963). Diver devotes himself to erecting a comprehensive schema for the English
verb system by relating each verb-phrase morpheme to a set of elemental semantic features which constitute its structural meaning. The form-meaning correlation is called a "signal" (p. 152). Morphemes may combine in various ways, thereby creating a new signal, but the meaning of such a combination is not necessarily the sum of its individual elements: "there is no single form...that invariably accompanies a certain meaning" (p. 180). This is supposed to reflect an "economy of means" à la Martinet, but Diver takes it even more strongly to mean that there is no requirement that morphologically related forms (forms paradigmatically parallel) should have identical or related meanings. It will be seen later that Diver in fact uses this freedom to create quite heterogeneous descriptions of what are elsewhere considered neatly symmetrical verb forms.

One of the distinctive features of Diver's treatment (shared with Sweet (1900)) is that he employs a definiteness opposition to distinguish the "simple" forms from those traditionally called "expanded" or "progressive", e.g. he walked vs. he was walking. It is not a simple plus or minus opposition, however, because the preterit is unmarked for definiteness. This arrangement is promoted on the grounds that the preterit occurs not only with adverbs expressing definite occasions, but also with "words that are normally indefinite in meaning" (p. 156).19 Diver wants to get around the problem other ID theorists have of explaining why we can say No one ever asked that question before, which denies the happening of the specified event at any time in the past, a hard thing to render in terms of a "definite past". It also responds to the ambiguity present in He played golf on Tuesday, which

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can either recount the event of a particular past Tuesday, or a habitual activity repeated any number of times (p. 157). The progressive is tabbed definite only, for its incompatibility with "indefinite" adverbs: *No one was ever asking that question before. And the perfect has just the reverse incompatibility: No one has ever asked that question before is fine, but *No one has asked that question yesterday is not. (Note that No one has asked that question on Tuesday seems to be limited to the indefinite reading—on a Tuesday.) There is thus a three-way relationship in terms of definiteness between preterit, preterit progressive, and present perfect. Other features that contrast will be presented shortly.

But before getting into the fine details, it is worth pausing to cast a critical eye upon Diver's use of definiteness as portrayed just above. It is true that the example

He played golf on Tuesday, rode horseback on Wednesday and rested on Thursday.

can be, as Diver says, "an account of the activities of three particular days or a statement of a program that was repeated an indefinite number of times" (p. 157). The implication is that the perfect he has played golf would be available only for the reading of indefinitely iterated events. This is not necessarily the case. We might initiate a response with How has he been occupying himself this week?:

Well, he's played golf on Tuesday, ridden horseback on Wednesday, and rested on Thursday. That's all I know about so far.

The times remain particular, but the "so far" time-frame of the whole supports the perfect. It is not necessary to have several days specifically mentioned for this to work, either. The question Has he been
doing much golf this week? might be answered

So far, he's played golf only on Tuesday.

Diver maintains that

I have gone skating on Christmas day.

can mean only "...on a Christmas day," (ibid.) but we can supply the context Have you gone skating yet this winter?, in which case on Christmas day is just as specific as in

This last winter I went skating only on Christmas day.

The basic difference, then, lies in the overall reference-period or time-frame: is the period over or is it still with us? Here we return to a principle brought up on several previous occasions.

Interestingly, Diver does recognize the need to distinguish the times of events from the periods encompassing them—but only in regard to the progressive. It will be remembered that he designated the progressive as definite only, because of the dubious standing of

*No one was ever asking such a question before, where the denial that the asking ever took place makes it impossible to refer to the event, hence the sense must be indefinite. There are other examples mentioned by Diver where this reasoning doesn't seem to apply, however. All of the following are fine:

Wherever he has gone, he has been well received.

Wherever he went, he was well received.

Wherever he was going, he was being well received.

The wherever phrase is supposedly indefinite; it is not in conflict with the simple preterit, which is unmarked for definiteness. But the version with the past progressive is embarrassing. Diver's ploy is to
say that it is acceptable "if the indefiniteness of wherever can be confined within a definite occasion," as is done in

Wherever he was going in 1960 he was being well received but that's no longer the case. (p. 157)

In fact, it appears that Diver thinks of "confine ment within a definite occasion" as just about equivalent to "confinement within a period which is over"; this can be seen in his comments on the example He was always being a loyal subject, interpreted as "he was always putting on the appearance of being a loyal subject":

always...extends the definite occasion in time...yet it does not make it indefinite. A 'definite occasion in past time' does not extend into the present, even when modified by always, whereas an indefinite occasion, being without boundaries, may. (p. 158)

While we may not agree with calling the progressive "definite", Diver's position has forced him into giving us an entirely separate type of definiteness for the preterit/perfect opposition. This turns out to be, I think, something much closer to the truth, but it is considerably removed from the definiteness properties of noun phrases with which there is supposed to be a "peculiar affinity" (p. 156). Diver considers the affinity so well established that he ignores actual discrepancies. In the following passage, he discusses examples in which the presence of a definite direct object appears to block use of the perfect:

We may expect incompatibility between the definite and indefinite forms of the verb and the definite and indefinite article. This is found in certain simple cases where the definiteness of the occasion is controlled entirely by the article. *I have received the new pen as a gift does not occur, but I have received a new pen as a gift does. In other cases, where the may be used of an indefinite occasion, such as an occurrence of the World Series, which recurs annually, incompatibility is produced only by the addition of another definite element. Hence The Yankees
have won the World Series, but not *The Yankees have won
the World Series in 1961. (p. 158)

To take the second example first, it is certainly not true that The
Yankees have won the World Series has only the reading in which the is
"used of an indefinite occasion"—consider The Yankees have just won the
World Series, i.e. "just now". The exclusion of the new pen is striking,
but it is hardly "simple". For one thing, we can perfectly well say

Look! I've received this new pen as a gift.

where the nominal is made just as definite by this as it would be by
the—as Defromont (1973, pp. 35-36), observes. Defromont also offers

I've broken/lost the new pen.

again definite. We may adduce the further possibilities:

I've bought the new pen as a gift.

I heard that John bought a new pen, and now I've
received the new pen as a gift.

Whatever is funny about *I have received the new pen as a gift by itself
seems to have little or nothing to do with the definiteness of the object
nominal. It seems to concern a shift in meaning of receive as from
"receive via a particular channel" to "accept in the spirit of" to
accommodate the perfect:

Since I've received the new pen as a gift from them, I
can't very well go around saying they haven't done me
any favors.

Beyond this speculation we will not venture, as it is apart from our
main issue.
3.10. We will next examine the arrangements of semantic features
Diver employs to register meaning oppositions among the various verb
forms. Though he deals with the entirety of the verb system, we shall
concentrate our attention on the subset of greatest relevance to our
particular theme in these pages. The verb forms involved are preterit,
present perfect, past perfect, and past (preterit) progressive. The
features forming their matrix are time, with the values PRESENT or PAST;
definiteness, opposing DEFINITE and INDEFINITE; sequence, comprising
BEFORE, SIMULTANEOUS, and AFTER (pp. 165 ff.); and extension, which
appears to place EXTENDED in opposition only with absence of specifica-
tion for extension. It is mostly associated with the periphrasis
keep on V-ing (p. 161), but also with the ordinary progressive forms.
The other features may be unspecified, or unmarked, for a given form,
when the feature is not part of the intrinsic meaning of the form.
Diver gives the form-meaning correlations in alphanumerical code, which
I have rendered into capitalized glosses, as above. Unmarked features
are enclosed in parentheses, and prefixed with U. With the above
definitions in mind, we can proceed to discuss the matrix:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>preterit (past)</th>
<th>past perfect</th>
<th>past perfect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>went</td>
<td>PAST (UDEF)</td>
<td>(USEQ)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>was going</td>
<td>past progressive</td>
<td>PAST DEF</td>
<td>(USEQ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has gone</td>
<td>present perfect</td>
<td>PAST INDEF</td>
<td>(USEQ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>had gone</td>
<td>past perfect</td>
<td>PAST (UDEF)</td>
<td>BEFORE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Cf. pp. 153-58, 164-68 et passim.) We first observe that went and
and has gone are distinguished solely by definiteness, as was reflected
in Diver's commentary. In fact, there is nothing new here but the use
of BEFORE to distinguish had gone from went. Had gone has nothing in
common with has gone but PAST, which is common to all the forms. Other than this lack of parallelism, there is nothing obviously wrong with using BEFORE in this way;²² Diver says "the meaning 'before' may be supported by showing compatibility with extra-verbal indicators of that meaning: The lecture had already begun." (p. 165) (The meaning BEFORE may be carried entirely outside the verb, as in after he arrived, the lecture began, but the past perfect always marks sequence.) Now how about he had been going, the past perfect progressive? Diver adds on another feature, extension (p. 169)

he had been past perfect PAST (UDEF) BEFORE EXTENDED

Since DEF in the past progressive is not opposed by any marking in the past perfect, and BEFORE in the past perfect is not in marked opposition to the past progressive, some new contrast feature was clearly needed. Extension can be over one occasion or many, definite or indefinite, and is generally independent of other marks (pp. 160-61). So far, so good. But now if he had been walking is defined as PAST, BEFORE, EXTENDED, then it seems only natural that he has been walking should mean PRESENT, EXTENDED, BEFORE. This definition is not excluded by anything Diver says; and in fact, this very code appears in his summary table on p. 154 (coded as BKII), and in textual examples later on:

All day the sun has warmed the Spanish steps, and now the scattered beggars who have been huddling (BKII) there begin to cast about for nocturnal shelter...The more optimistic souvenir sellers, who have kept shouting (BKII) their wares all day, are still keeping on shouting... (p. 175)

Diver does discuss this form elsewhere, but in terms of an entirely different code, namely
and gives the example he has been walking, in free variation with he has kept walking (p. 161). It will be observed that comparison with the other code, which is unmarked for definiteness,

offers no marked feature contrast other than PRES to PAST. This is somewhat unsettling on its own, but there is a further significance. The alternative coding can be analogized quite simply to the present perfect; this possibility (PRESENT, BEFORE, coded BN) appears in passing on p. 165, and crops up in the same text sample cited above (from p. 175): All day the sun has warmed (BN) the Spanish steps... In full form, the code would be:

present perfect PRESENT (UDEF) BEFORE (UEXT)

Compare this with the set of features originally given:

present perfect PAST INDEF (USEQ) (UEXT)

We have filled in unmarked values according to Diver's stipulations, viz.

The mark K [= extended] is not related by an opposition of exclusion to any of the other marks; in fact, it combines with every other mark in this section to form more complicated meanings. (p. 160)

...there is no definite-indefinite opposition in sequence... (p. 171)

Now, it has been noted in phonology that if we allow a specification of "unmarked" to stand in opposition to a specification of either a "+marked" or a "-marked" value, we are really talking about three entities distinguished by a supposedly binary feature: this is an error of feature usage. (Cf. Chomsky & Halle (1968) pp. 382 ff.) We are
therefore to assume that none of Diver's "unmarked" specifications should be considered distinct from either a marked or an unmarked specification of a verb form. We might well imagine an instance in which other elements in the verb phrase would supply the values INDEF, BEFORE, with EXTD missing; in such a circumstance, the only difference between Diver's two feature specifications above would be PAST vs. PRES, as was the case in the past perfect (feature values supplied by context are marked ▷):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{PRESENT} & \quad ▷\text{INDEF} \quad \text{BEFORE} \quad (\text{UEXTD}) \\
\text{PAST} & \quad \text{INDEF} \quad ▷\text{BEFORE} \quad (\text{UEXTD})
\end{align*}
\]

But this is not the only problem. For one thing, since the only marked features of the past perfect were PAST and BEFORE, the past perfect is not distinct from the present perfect in the latter's guise of PAST, ▷BEFORE. The trouble is that BEFORE is not properly a feature, but a relation: something is before something else. In the past perfect, reference is to something "before then", viz. "before a time already past"; in the present perfect it is "before now". If BEFORE is to be interpreted at all consistently within Diver's system, it cannot be allowed freely alongside the specification of the present perfect as PAST. On the other hand, if the present perfect, when interpreted as PRESENT, BEFORE, is truly unmarked for definiteness, then it can presumably render PRES, ▷DEF, BEFORE reference; but given that BEFORE here means "before now", can it really be argued that the preterit is different—is the preterit not in fact just equivalent to a definite "before-now" tense? Are not the two features PRESENT and BEFORE translatable into the feature PAST? It would seem that either Diver must maintain
that the preterit and the present perfect are always mutually distin-
tinguished by some feature such as definiteness, or his system of
oppositions collapses. On the alternative PAST, INDEF analysis of
the present perfect, the meaning of BEFORE—which may cooccur—must be
specified as somehow different from the BEFORE of the past perfect,
or once again the system of oppositions collapses.

In any case, it is clear that Diver's own choice of features
has led him into certain indeterminacies which force arbitrary choices,
and defeat the claim to a perspicuous, consistent, and self-contained
analysis of the English verb system—at least in those areas of interest
to us here. Even an ID schema reinforced with other properties such as
"sequence" and "extension" seems inadequate for modelling the semantics
of the past tenses.

3.11. In this chapter we have examined "indefinite past" theories of
the perfect from several different angles. First we inquired into the
meaning of definiteness and indefiniteness as those terms are applied
in the more familiar realm of nominal expressions. We found that for
a noun phrase to be definite, it must have a referent that is a
discreet, separable entity with clear demarkation from other elements
of the same type or from the surrounding contextual field. It must also
be "known" to the interlocutors in the sense that they can identify
just which thing is the focus of their attention at that particular
moment. (This requirement does not entail that the entity actually be extant, only that it be sufficiently well pinpointed that no confusion may occur.) When we applied these conditions to verbal expressions in which forms of the preterit make an appearance, and to the adverbs which accompany those forms, we found that one or both of them often was not filled; or that they were filled, but the perfect appeared. To work the notion of definiteness into the description of the preterit, we had to make substantial revisions. These revisions move in the direction of a distinction between the "past of the extended now" and the "past separate from now", which will be studied further in the next chapter.

We also investigated a number of specific analyses of the English tense-system as a whole, or at least those subparts which bear on our central issue. These analyses attempt to place each tense in its proper relation to the others in terms of an abstract semantic map, so as to correctly represent phenomena of the temporal organization of discourse, especially sequencing, "backshifting", etc. As it turns out, these models show a number of deficiencies which cast doubt on the serviceability of the ID conceptions of tense contained in them. I concluded that ID theory is not supported either directly or indirectly.
FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER 3

1. A somewhat more recent, but less elaborated, statement of this argument appears in Leech (1969):

   the definite past of saw, lied, etc. is in contrast with the indefinite past which it is one of the functions of the perfect to express. The difference between 'I saw him' and 'I have seen him' is therefore parallel to that between the man and a man. (p. 144)

2. In philosophy, terms whose reference cannot be specified outside of the specific context of each use are called "indexicals"; another term used in linguistics is "shifters" (cf. Jakobson (1957)). These do not, however, form a grammatical class, strictly speaking—as Sedey (1969) cautions:

   being an indexical singular term is neither a syntactic nor semantic property of words. On deciding that a word is an indexical, one places the word in a pragmatic category. Thus, we shouldn't say that the symbol 'this' is an indexical. What we should say is that the symbol 'this' usually is used as an indexical in the English language.
   To classify a word as an indexical expression is to say something about the way it is used in English to fulfill its singular referring function. (pp. 54-55)

3. Useful discussions of types of definiteness, and the nature of referring in general as viewed by linguists, are Lyons (1968), Moravcsik (1969), Fillmore (1971), Partee (1973a), Stockwell et al. (1973), and Nunberg & Pan (1975).

4. There has been a long philosophical debate as to whether this kind of description actually refers to anything (i.e. has an extension or denotation), or only characterizes something (has an intension or connotation). More extreme examples include the square root of the number two. For our purposes, it is sufficient to note the distinction between the referential and the attributive (characterizing) uses of definite nominals. See especially Nunberg & Pan (1975). We will return to this topic in the next chapter.

5. A complication I will try to avoid is mixing my use of the term "definite" with other usages which can be quite contradictory with it. For example, Diver (1963) who regards the -ing forms of the verb as definite, exemplifies the "extreme case" via

   the ironic He is always needing money, where even always is forced to be definite, and the definite occasion is said to be permanent. (p. 173)

   Rescher & Urquhart (1971) go even further:

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We shall say that a statement is *temporally definite* if its truth or falsity is independent of the time at which it is asserted. (p. 25)

Statements of this sort are what linguists generally call "generic."

6. Cf. Allen:

   It must be emphasized here that the moment of coding (or "the moment of speech") is as definitely an identified time as any identified time in the past. The basic difference between these two different kinds of identified time is that the moment of coding does not require formal identification: the speaker or writer may assume that his audience recognizes the time of the moment of coding. But a definite time in the past (or even in the future) must be identified by some formal means unless both speaker and hearer share some common experience on the basis of which the speaker can assume that the hearer knows the definite time to which he is referring. (p. 164)

I do not agree that the past time need be as definite as the MOC, as subsequent argument will try to show.

7. Partee (1973) offers some structural analogies between English tenses and pronouns based on parallel uses. Among other things, she describes the use of the preterit referring to "a particular time— not a particular instant, most likely, but a definite interval whose identity is generally clear from the extralinguistic context, just as the identity of the he...is clear from context." (p. 603) The past, however, "often seems to be much vaguer in its reference, and is perhaps to be compared to some uses of the pronoun they."

   In *They haven't installed my telephone yet*, they refer to "whoever it is that's supposed to install the telephone" while the preterit in *John went to a private school refers to "whenever it was that John went to school*" (ibid). The parallel here seems to be between nonreferential uses, in fact. (Compare *I haven't met the man I'm going to marry yet where the man* is functioning attributively.) There are problems with the pronoun analogy, as Partee notes: "every full clause contains a tense whether it contains a time adverbial or not, whereas a sentence containing a full noun phrase need not contain a pronoun in addition" (p. 604) for one thing. I will not pursue the treatment of tenses and pronouns as variables, since this is not part of the ID theories I am discussing, which operate entirely within "definite reference" parallels.

8. Examples from Ota (1963):

   *The United Nations has doubled in size since these councils were created.* (p. 43)

   Actually the organization of the council has taken place over two or three years. (p. 36)
The cumulative events of "doubling in size" and "organizing the council" cannot be pinned down to specific times. (We shall examine temporal ambiguities with similar examples later.) Bryan's example given earlier about European civilization existing "for long ages" only in the lands adjacent to the Mediterranean is relevant here, too: what counts as the beginning of civilization, what counts as the onset of settled existence, what counts as the actual movement into more remote lands? It is almost as if we were saying whenever it was that European civilization could truly be said to have come into full existence, it was thereafter for a long time located...

9. This is the basis of Palmer's (1967) criticism of Diver, whose work we will study shortly:

Time and time again Diver quotes examples to prove that the present perfect is not used where a definite time is indicated, but we find that it is past time, marked by a past time adverb and it is, of course, because it is past, not because it is definite, that the present perfect cannot be used. At no place does he show that the perfect cannot be used where a definite present time is indicated. Yet this is perfectly possible. We cannot say *I have seen him yesterday but the reason is that it is past time, not that it is definite; but we can say I have seen him today, or even, of course, I have just seen him. (pp. 190-91)

Obviously, Palmer is not speaking of "past adverbs" in a general sense, but just those which happen to require or at least accept the preterit.

10. They are thus basically "notional" or "onomasiological" theories, as opposed to those which start with the available tense choices and work towards a characterization of the meaning(s) of each form, a "semasiological" procedure. Diver seems to be somewhere between the two.

11. The same criticism applies to the tense theory presented in Katz (1972, pp. 306 ff.) which is strongly similar to Reichenbach's.

12. Bull acknowledges that there is no theoretical limit to the number of axes that could be set up:

...we are dealing with an open system in which the projectional possibilities are theoretically infinite. From each axis the model can always go on to another and still another...The complicated problems of relativity... indicate that there is justification for assuming that there exists some practical limit to this type of projection in ordinary language. (p. 22)

We do not quarrel with the idea of a practical limit. We do question Bull's particular selection of four axes as the necessary and sufficient
number for dealing with English, especially in singling out the axis RAP as the only "compound" axis for inclusion.

13. This property appears more graphically in Leech's (1969, p. 148) version of ID theory, diagrammed with points of reference as:

```
1 PR      PR
*       *  He sees me

2PR   1 PR
*       *  He saw me

PR
*       *  He has seen me

2PR   1 PR
*       *  He had seen me
```

14. Bull does not stick exclusively to his ID theory in later writings. Although his 1965 pedagogical work is largely a condensation of the 1960 discussion we have been examining, we find him saying at one point in the 1965 treatment,

In teaching, special emphasis needs to be placed on the orientation of the two forms [preterit and perfect]. It is obvious, in principle, that any event anterior to PP may be described by either the Present Perfect or the Preterite. The contrastive difference lies in how relationships are organized or, said in other words, the relevance of the event to either the past or the present. An event which has over-riding current relevance will require the Present Perfect... (p. 165)

Thus he reaches over into CR terminology; we will later see that he also espouses, indirectly, a third theory which belongs in the XN ("extended now") class. The language, incidentally, being discussed above was Spanish, but the forms are used in much the same way as English.

15. There is an unfortunate confusion in the term "reference point", which sometimes denotes the time "pointed at" by a tense, and sometimes the time "point from": the preterit expresses events of a time past with respect to the present (the MOC). The time "with respect to" which, we will normally call the "orientation" point or "root" of the tense. The past time itself will be the "reference" point proper. (Note that Allen uses "orientation" only for the topmost points in a hierarchy; we would prefer to say that the reference of each tense supplies the orientation for the next tense embedded below, in describing his theoretical position.)

16. Since Allen treats the future tense as only marking time-relationship (p. 150), we would expect it to be regularly indefinite in reference; yet when he asserts that
English does not distinguish formally between a "definite" future and an "indefinite" future, as it does between a "definite" past and an "indefinite" past. (p. 158)

it seems that the future can be construed as definite. Further confusion appears when will is said to have been "backshifted" to would in indirect speech, by the addition of the "definite" past morpheme (p. 172), as in

Percy said that he will come again next Friday.

Percy said that he would come again the next Friday.

Apparently next Friday without the is supposed to be indefinite, but this can hardly be the case. The difference is whether "next Friday" is defined with respect to the MOC, or with respect to a past time; in both cases it is definite. In fact, since the hearer may not know just when Percy made his promise, he will have less certainty as to the exact placement of "the next Friday" in the time-scheme.

17. Allen admits that there is an anomaly in that choice of matrix verb seems to influence tense-sequence behavior:

included clauses following hope commonly have present verb forms for reference to future time, although future verb forms also occur in such clauses: I hope next Sunday is/will be a pleasant day. (p. 169)

Costa (1972) has shown that backshifting is obligatory for nonfactive verbs (thought, wished, etc.) generally, but optional for factives (forget, regret), where the choice seems to depend on "presupposed relevance" to the conversation, often expressive of agreement with the assertion (p. 45). Another anomaly is that

Reference in an included clause to a time later than the time of the main verb is commonly signaled by a past verb form...not by would [e.g. Percy got there before I did] ...(Allen, pp. 10-11)

Allen also recognizes that conjunctions have an influence on tense sequencing in certain cases: use of the simple preterit in place of the "expected" past perfect "seems to be especially common in included clauses introduced by after" where "the function of signaling 'earlier time' is taken over by the includer after" (p. 170). Conjunctions actually have a much larger role to play than Allen allows for.

18. A detailed argument has been made by Kittredge (1969) to the effect that embedded tenses are all tied to the MOC; he claims that in sentences with a temporal clause, both clauses must have the same tense, so that only one tense specification is necessary for the whole sentence.
Unfortunately, the proposal requires making the perfect a trivial variant of the preterit, which is why I must reject it. (Smith (1974) does something similar to Kittredge, but winds up deriving past perfects from two different sources in a manner I find creates more problems than it solves.) Some as yet unrealized compromise between the positions of Allen and Kittredge seems to be called for, one that would reflect the fact that in sentences of "free indirect quotation", the tenses shift but the adverbs do not: He wondered if she would be back tomorrow. (On this issue, see Banfield (1973).)

19. More recently, this argument for the definiteness-neutrality of the preterit has been given by König (1974) who discusses cooccurring prepositional phrases:

For differs from during, over and throughout in so far as it combines with noun phrases which do not refer to specific periods of time...The noun phrases that may follow temporal for are measure periods which indicate and delimit the duration of certain events...Thus the difference between for and during or throughout is similar to that between a certain use of the indefinite and definite article. (p. 559)

Since the preterit can go with both types of phrase, the preterit would seem to be indifferent to definiteness. Note that on the same basis, the perfect is also indifferent. (The progressive is not entirely free with the different prepositions, but this is not necessarily just a matter of definiteness.) Millington-Ward (1966, p. 44) also observes that adverbs accompanying the preterit "may be either definite...or indefinite: e.g. a long time ago; once upon a time; (It does not matter how indefinite it is. Even the most indefinite of all: once--an abbreviation of once upon a time--is good enough..."

20. Actually, Diver is inconsistent in this matter. On p. 159 he says that the mark for "repeated"

is related by an opposition of exclusion to the mark..."definite", but is irrelevant to the mark..."indefinite"...the meaning T [= repetition] cannot refer to a single occasion...the meaning S, 'definite', must refer to a single occasion.

21. Uldall (1948a, 1948b) winds up making a similar modification of the sense of "definite": while I was in Paris "refers to a definite point in the past which must be identified" (a, p. 123), "our point, unlike Euclid's, has extension: we shared a flat all through the war" (b, p. 149). On the other hand, I have been in Paris "does not refer to any point in time but merely indicates that my visit, or visits, to Paris fell somewhere within a period extending up to and including the present moment" (a, p. 123). The preterit "clearly refers the action to a time preceding and detached from the present moment" (b, p. 149). Thus the opposition turns on whether the time-frame of the event is
"detached" from the MOC or includes it. I think this is correct, but represents a considerable shift from the definite/indefinite opposition in nominals.

22. The lack of parallelism is a potential criticism itself against Diver's analysis. Palmer (1967) summarizes:

A priori one would expect some isomorphism between the formal and the semantic systems and would expect the semantics to be linked to the formally independent two-term systems of tense, phase, and aspect [Palmer's terms]. Diver's semantic system links together the formally dissimilar present perfect, past progressive and simple past. This raises a difficulty, moreover, about the analysis of the past perfect I had been reading. The usual interpretation would assign it the meanings of the past, perfect and progressive, and it ought therefore to combine most of the meanings of I was reading and I have read. In Diver's interpretation, this is impossible since it would combine definiteness with indefiniteness. His solution is to treat this form in an entirely separate analysis in which it has the meaning 'past, before' and where the present perfect has the meaning 'present, before' (and not 'past, indefinite'). (p. 191)

A similar disparity between present and past perfect was evident in Allen as we discussed earlier.

23. We saw in the previous chapter that Joos rejects this equation on account of his claim that the perfect makes assertions only about the present. Calver (1946) would apparently agree:

the user of the present perfect means that an action important in the present is completed (i.e. perfect); although such an action may be inferred to be past, he is not saying that it is past. (p. 321)

Given this framework, I do not see how the perfect would be any different from the straight present tense: the sun is out does not say that a prior event of the sun's coming out occurred, though it may well be inferred. If an action is presently completed, is it not necessarily also past? Calver seems to be thinking of completion in a current relevance sense, identifying a specific present state. I have previously argued that this cannot be part of the denotation of the perfect, but only the contribution of inference.

Palmer and Blandford (1939) separate "pastness" from "anteriority"(p72): pastness is an association "with a point (or series of points) of time situated entirely in the past" while the latter merely places the event somewhere before another point of time, usually the moment of speaking. But clearly there are elements here other than the mere "beforeness" of the event, and it is they that support the past/anterior split.

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Terrell (1970), basing his analysis of English and Spanish on that of Bull, feels that +PAST -ANTERIOR is scarcely different from -PAST +ANTERIOR, and they are entirely equivalent if no specific time is mentioned, or else the "current relevance" of the event is indicated by expressions external to the verb phrase. Cases like the following, which meet both these conditions, are "completely synonymous" (p. 30):

John has studied the lesson, so he will do well on the exam tomorrow.

John studied the lesson, so he will do well on the exam tomorrow.

It is clear that Terrell does not think "reference to a definite but unspecified time" is any different from "reference to an indefinite time". This I am in agreement with, as far as it goes. Yet I cannot agree that there is no difference between the sense of the examples. The nature of this difference will be the subject of the next chapter.

24. This is an acceptable outcome, of course, if Diver wishes to maintain that those instances in which there is no featural conflict are semantically equivalent. Diver never indicates whether he accepts complete neutralization between the perfect and the preterit, when the latter occurs with indefinite adverbials. Of course, there would be no neutralization if the perfect has feature-specifications including PRESENT. The issue remains unresolved.
Chapter 4
EXPANDED NOW THEORY

4.1. The reader who has gone through the preceding chapters will have noted that at several points I argued the merits of an analysis of the perfect as the marker of prior events which are nevertheless included within the overall period of the present, the "extended now", while the preterit marks events assigned to a past which is concluded and separate from the extended present. He will therefore not require an extended introduction, as I attempt to elaborate and refine this conceptualization in the present chapter. I have already pointed out how the extended-now theory (XN theory, for short) seems to overcome various particular problems in the rationalization of examples, and avoids attaching basically contextual information to the verb forms themselves (the characteristic fault of CR theory). We also saw that the failure of ID theory to prove a close parallel between the definiteness oppositions of nominals and those of tenses provoked modifications—often by the ID theorists themselves—which tend strongly toward XN theory. The following pages will be devoted to consolidating the form of XN theory, by investigating its representation in the literature, which is generally quite infrequent and oblique, and by going into greater detail about the relationship of adverbial expressions, and of certain other linguistic elements, to the interpretation of tense meanings.

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4.2. We will begin with Pickbourn (1789), our early scholar who seems to have had his thumb in just about every theoretical pie relating to the preterit/perfect contrast. In the guise of setting up a distinction based on definiteness, he at one point virtually equates "indefinite" with "included in present time", and "definite" with "excluded from the present":

I have written...evidently belongs to present tense. We do not say, I have written yesterday, I have written the first of August; but we say I wrote yesterday, I wrote the first of August. This tense [sc. the perfect] may properly be called the present perfect, or perfect indefinite. It always expresses a perfect or completed action; but an action that has been completed or perfected in the present time, i.e. in the present day, the present year, the present age &c. If we speak of the present century, we say, philosophers have made great discoveries in the present century; but if we speak of the last century, we say, philosophers made great discoveries in the last century. (p. 31)

A bit later he allows as how the very recent past is not strictly speaking indefinite, but the "present period" characterization still holds:

...in one case it [the perfect] is definite with respect to time, i.e. when it signifies a thing done in the point of time preceding the present instant; as I have just now written a letter. But in all other cases it is, with respect to time, indefinite; for it only limits the action to a period of time, some of which is not yet expired, without referring to any particular part of that period. For, if I only say, Dr. Priestly has published an English grammar, I do not thereby ascertain whether he published it yesterday or thirty years ago. (p. 32)

We may note that Dr. Priestly published...would not necessarily "ascertain" the date of publication with any greater precision, but beyond this I will not go in repeating my arguments of the last chapter. (Cf. especially the discussions of Diver and Uldall, who both "bend" their versions of ID theory in the direction of XN theory,
in a manner similar to Pickbourn.) However, the observation that the perfect places "completed events" within the present is crucial. Pickbourn was clearly aware of the role of what we may call the "reference period" of the past event, though like many others, he considers this notion to be interchangeable with other theoretical constructs.¹ Much of what I have been saying so far is intended to show that apparently minor differences in theoretical approach are sometimes quite significant, and that one theory may fail while another "equivalent" theory succeeds.

I have previously shown how the reference period to which the past event is assigned is not solely governed by adverbs, nor indeed by any external factor; it is essentially the speaker's subjective identification of relevant time periods that comes to bear (though there are certain linguistic consequences that he must follow through on, given his choice of period).² This was realized by a few early grammarians, mostly non-native students of English; for example, Mätzner (1892) commented,

[G] A grammatical preconception that crops up here and there is that facts which fall in the time period to which the speaker himself belongs, may not properly be rendered by the preterit. Here it is simply a matter of whether the time period to which the fact being related pertains is to be thought of as concluded within the overall time bounds: 'I saw the man today'... (p. 94)

The period defined as "today"—to which the speaker certainly "belongs"—may be subdivided mentally into various subparts to which the speaker is attending ("earlier today", "during the lunch hour", etc.) A similar understanding is expressed by Brinkmann (1906, p. 724), who identifies the preterit with the past [G] "closed off from the time
of the speaker", thus separated from the speaker's present by a "time gap"—an idea picked up by a few later writers. Even where there is no explicit adverb with the preterit, he says, the choice of the preterit tacitly presupposes an opposition between the present and the time of the act, and thereby contradicts the view that the act belongs to [the speaker's] present. (p. 725)

It is not a question of such external matters as today and yesterday, but of the manner in which the speaker conceives the event. If we're dealing with a fact which the speaker holds in mind as vividly as if it had only just happened, as if it occurred in the time he can call "present" or "most recent past", then the perfect is used, regardless of whether it happened today, yesterday, or the day before. (p. 728)

Of course the choice is not completely free, since some adverbs seem to force the preterit, "even for acts which have happened on the same day they are spoken about" (p. 730). This is a topic to which we will return.

4.3. Having complained that XN theory is usually found entangled with other theories, it behooves us to seek a representative of XN theory who clearly separates it from competing analyses, and shows full awareness of the consequences of doing so. The single clearest and most unequivocal defense of XN theory I have come across is Bryan (1936), an unfortunately obscure article in a journal of limited circulation. I mentioned his objections to CR and ID theories earlier. (He also
rejects iterativity as the meaning of the perfect, as well as any special meaning of "completion", as championed by Poutsma and Curme, which we will look at later.) Bryan's version of the preterit/perfect opposition is stripped to the bare bone:

The preterite tense represents an action or state as having occurred or having existed at a past moment or during a past period of time that is definitely separated from the actual present moment of speaking or writing. (p. 363)

...the perfect tense merely includes an action or state within certain limits of time, and as a tense form it seems to me to do no more than this. (p. 367)

The "limits of time" involved are those of a period which began in the past and extends up to or into the present. The terminus a quo of this period of time may be made any point--however near or however remote--preceding the present; the terminus ad quem is always the present moment of speaking or writing. That is, from the point of view of the present the speaker looks back upon some continuous stretch of the past and within this he places the action or state. This period of past time may be momentary, as in "The messenger has just arrived"; or it may be of considerable extent as in "The old house has been left untenanted for many years"; or it may include all past time, as in Shakespeare's "Men have died from time to time and worms have eaten them, but not for love." (p. 366)

It is interesting that Dietrich, one of the few who acknowledge Bryan, praises him for his rejection of a literalist view of current relevance, and yet hedges (1955) that

Bryan, while fending off only too justifiably the inclusion of objective effects and consequences in the explanation of perfect-tense usage, goes too far in his rejection of the resultative character of this verb form, which surely by reason of its linguistic descent must have been completive from the very beginning; he doesn't even allow it in regard to the question "Have you finished?", which is certainly asked relative to the present state! (p. 176)
It is clear that Dietrich has not faced squarely Bryan's argument that there is no structural meaning of current relevance attached to the perfect.³ The nature of the perfect's historical origin is quite irrelevant for the synchronic description of its use (though the historical question has interest of its own, as we shall see in Chapter 6). And the fact that Have you finished? is "asked relative to the present state" is no more indicative of the syntactic analysis of the question and the per.ect contained in it, than the fact that Bingo! can be used (indeed regularly is used) to mean "I've filled out my row on the card, I win!" Dietrich persists that with the perfect,

[6] the point of departure is the present situation...the event causally associated with this situation is identified as having happened sometime before the present. (p. 184)

But this means that the existence of a present state somehow predicts that the causal act will be expressed in the perfect: "I am missing my umbrella," therefore I must say I have lost my umbrella. Obviously, we might just as well say Darn, I guess I lost it somewhere. The act of observing the present state does not force us to use the perfect; indeed if this were so, the perfect would be operating on a very different basis from the other verb forms—it would be used specifically to communicate that an act of reversing informational entropy had occurred, that is, that the present state had somehow automatically pinpointed the causal event and induced the speaker to use the perfect.

With this parting shot at an unregenerate current-relativist, let us turn to the major topic of this chapter, which concerns the way in which adverbs and other linguistic elements relate to the verb forms we are studying.
4.4. We will begin with the consideration of some examples which appear to violate the usual restrictions on verbform-adverb co-occurrence. We want to see just how serious a violation there is, and whether this truly puts our XN theory in jeopardy. Erades (1956) makes the statement that

It is often erroneously thought that an adjunct indicating past time necessarily entails the use of a past [i.e. preterit] tense. This is by no means true. (p. 44)

His examples are such as:

We have already discussed this affair at some length last night.

Twice already he has visited Japan, in 1898 and 1900.

Maurice (1935) provides the example

We have received information on F. S. from you on the 22nd of September last. (p. 318)

and explains:

So long as a past event is not mentally reconstructed as the equivalent of a cognition strictly bounded to its temporal position, that is, as an act, all it can represent for us in its result as a fact reappears before the mind as a subjective experience that is.

Dietrich (1955) picks up the same example from Maurice, and rationalizes it similarly:

[6] the fact is felt so intensively as a component of current experience that...the illogical linkage with an explicitly past segment of life is covered over. (p. 199)

If the mixture of have received with the 22nd of September last represents a "failure of mental reconstruction" or an "illogical linkage", then we would seem to be dealing with an exception to the normal pattern, perhaps even an error of usage, though none of the

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commentators wants to make such a judgment against the native speakers who produced the example. The fact is that all three of the listed cases sound "funny" to me.\textsuperscript{4} If Erades means that these cases are, in some sense, "regular exceptions", then we have something to worry about. Koziol (1958) apparently takes Erades in this light, and attempts to provide a logical accounting for We have already discussed ...last night, based on the observation that there are not one but two separate adverbs: [G] For the use of the present perfect, the word already is crucial: without already it would go We discussed it last night; with already it can only be We have discussed it already...In the sentence with already and last night, the already dominates, and the time adverb last night has the character of a secondary, more precise, specification. (p. 502)

In the example Twice already he has visited Japan, in 1898 and 1900 Koziol detects, just before the year-adverbs, the comma, and that shows that we are obviously dealing with an "after-thought", which is not a part of the statement twice already... (ibid.)

Without already, the year-specifiers could come to the fore and control for the past tense. The basic principle that it is the "primary" adverbial which controls the verb form is similar to my claim in the last chapter that specific, and otherwise "then"-time adverbs may be subsumed in an overall period which includes the MOC; what is different is the implication, derived from the awkwardness of the examples above, that the subsuming phenomenon has limits in resolving adverb-conflicts. Actually, whether or not we accept all the examples without reservation, they serve to highlight the issue of adverbial cooccurrences, which helps in establishing the real nature of the verb-form opposition. It

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is apparent that some adverbs are relatively recalcitrant to "cross-cooccurrence" with the "wrong" tense; others do not show this resistance. We do not need to say that the distinction of reference-period collapses with these adverbs, rather that they are ambiguous in this regard, and have different senses when used with different verb forms. Koziol expresses this clearly:

in all the cases in which the time adverb indicates an indefinite period which can be thought of as extending up to the present, but need not be so conceived, the choice of tense depends on whether the event is thought of as falling sometime within the period coming up to the present, or else the relevant period is thought of as separated from the present, as part of the closed past...

With an adverb like this morning we must keep in mind that by itself, it may refer to either the presently-continuing forenoon, or to the already concluded morning of the same day. But even during the forenoon we can say I saw him this morning when we're thinking of something like when I was leaving the house... (p. 503)

What we are working toward is an understanding that some adverbs habitually identify "then"-past time, and other adverbs habitually identify "now"-past time, that certain contexts allow "then"-adverbs to be included as part of the span of "now"-adverbs, and that there is a third kind of adverb, by far the most numerous, that habitually associates with both then-past and now-past. The distribution of adverbs among these classes is not as logical or natural as one might expect.

In fact, the classes are largely lexical matters: as Koziol notes (pp. 503-04), lately accepts only the perfect, while recently goes with both the preterit and the perfect. This is most curious, considering they are commonly regarded as synonymous, and certainly neither can be shown to be more definite than the other, or possessed of any other
semantic difference that would make their contrasting syntactic behavior seem more "natural":

He has been ill recently.
He was ill recently.
He has been ill lately.
*He was ill lately.

The most direct method of representing these differences is to mark the adverbs in the lexicon with some feature such as _THEN_. This is not a purely lexical marking, however, since the plus or minus value for those adverbs which are themselves ambiguous will be "filled in" from outside, that is, their specifications will have to correspond with the time-frame generated for the utterance as a whole, and the restricted adverbs will have to be in agreement with the choice of time-frame as well. For the present, however, we will use _THEN_ only for classificatory marking of adverbs.

4.5. The exact details of adverb meanings and cooccurrences are really rather complicated. Native speakers and writers of English do not all agree on which adverbs go with which tense or what their meanings are and there seems to have been a number of changes in common usage over the course of the last century or so. Recently and lately are good cases in point. Koziol remarks (p. 504) that certain examples of Jespersen's which employ lately with the preterit are felt to be
"antiquated and uncommon" by modern speakers polled in England; I would concur with this judgment of ??I saw him lately. But this is not all. The perfect I have seen him lately seems to be different from the analogous example with recently in that the former, but not the latter, is understood to refer to repeated, iterative, acts.

The subtle differences between recently and lately have been studied in detail by Stock (1973). She contrasts

I've bought a new car lately.

I've bought a new car recently.

where lately is grammatical only if the sentence is understood to mean "every few months lately I've bought a new car", or some such; while recently may refer to a singular occasion (though it need not). There is, however, an interaction with the position of the adverb: Stock claims that recently, I've bought a new car is understood only iteratively, like lately. This is why the following sound odd:

(*) Recently, he's been drafted.

(*) Recently, he's died.

(Stock stars these as completely unacceptable, but my intuitions are not so strong; I do find them odd, however. See below.) And to further complicate things, Stock finds that recently in sentence-final position is ambiguous between singular and iterative readings:

I've been to the movies (once/often) recently.

She also notes that lately, but not recently, can be used with the present tense.

Lately, he makes his bed every day.

*Recently, he makes his bed every day.
which suggests that *lately*, if not strictly a present adverb, is "partly present"; it includes the now-point (and the time before it, but not the time after it).

Returning to *recently*, Stock proposes that we must also distinguish a medial position of occurrence, because in these cases, the reading is of single occurrence:

I've recently met him in the Union (once).

She has recently been depressed (on one occasion).

*Lately*, on the other hand, is said to always be iterative, whatever position. Using ad-hoc features of PAST and ITERATIVE and the abbreviations I, M, and F for Initial, Medial, and Final position, we can represent Stock's claims as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>recently</em></td>
<td>+PAST</td>
<td>+PAST</td>
<td>+PAST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+ITER</td>
<td>-ITER</td>
<td>+ITER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>lately</em></td>
<td>-PAST</td>
<td>-PAST</td>
<td>-PAST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+ITER</td>
<td>+ITER</td>
<td>+ITER</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the basis of this system of specifications, Stock proposes that initial *recently* (iterative) is a sentence-modifier, while medial *recently* (noniterative) is a verb-phrase modifier; the ambiguity of final *recently* would be explained by positing a transformational rule which moves either of the underlying *recently* to final position (technically "to the right of an NP in its clause as long as it does not pass over an S", p. 238)—*lately* also moves by the same rule, but is not differentiated in original position as to meaning.
The viability of such a theoretical proposal is of course directly dependent on the accuracy of the data. I must admit that I do not agree with all of Stock's "good" and "bad" examples. For example, Stock says that She's been acting like a bitch necessarily refers to repeated events (p. 234), so a medial recently (always non-iterative) would not be expected to be comfortable in such a sentence: (*)She's been recently acting like a bitch. But notice that the position of the adverb in this example of Stock's (p. 234) is following the past participle (ibid.), whereas all the prior examples of "medial" adverbs have the adverb preceding the participle: He's recently encouraged him to look for a new job; I've recently met him in the Union (cf. pp. 232-33). If we reposition the adverb to fit these latter cases of "medial" recently, we get a perfectly acceptable She's recently been acting like a bitch so that nothing is proved about the noniterativity of medial recently (even assuming that "acting like a bitch" is properly identified as an iterative expression). Similarly Stock says that the following are in clear contrast:

Recently he made many new friends (more than one time).
He recently made many new friends (at one time).

(Cf. pp. 234-35) I simply do not find this opposition operative as I try to identify what each example means. In particular, I find the following variants acceptable:

Recently he made many new friends by attending a big party (one).
Recently he has made many new friends by attending a big party (one).
He recently made many new friends by attending a number of parties
He has recently made many new friends by attending a number of parties.
It would be possible, I suppose, to claim that there were many individual occasions of making friends at the big party, and that the attendance at various parties could have all been on one evening, and so constitute "one occasion"; but when the distinctions get as subtle as this, I find no clear intuition available on the propriety of the adverb recently. In fact, I suspect that the apparent oddness of Recently, he died/has died is due to some other factor entirely. Consider, for example,

Recently he declared himself in the Governor's race.

Recently he has declared himself in the Governor's race.

Presumably, such a declaration is in essence a one-time event in that one act of declaring is sufficient, and subsequent acts of the same content superfluous. Yet the initial recently seems perfectly at home. Perhaps the following dialog can indicate something of the real nature of the difficulty behind Stock's examples:

You know, I haven't heard anything lately from Mr. Cruz.

What's he been up to recently?

?Well, recently, he died.
Well, recently, he got remarried.
Well, recently, he started going to night school.

Somehow the preposed adverb, emphasizing as it does only recent news, sounds ludicrous with something as overwhelming as a death. However, since I am not directly interested in this issue, I will not pursue it further. The point stands that recently does not seem to me to have different values of iterativity depending on sentence position. This eliminates any reason to distinguish recently in terms of sentence position. We are left with the following contrast between recently and lately:

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recently +PAST lately -PAST
+ITER +ITER

Even with this simplification, however, the significant fact remains that the two adverbs must be kept apart in terms of their cooccurrence with the preterit; in terms of our expository feature THEN, recently is +THEN, lately is -THEN.

4.6. Let us return to Koziol and look at some other adverbs. He states (p. 504) that one can use long ago with both the preterit and the perfect; I do not agree with this—I find the first example dubious:?

?I have forgiven her long ago.

I forgave her long ago.

But this may simply reflect a categorization of long ago which differs among native speakers of English. This possibility of variability still requires something like our feature specification to describe: long ago = +THEN/+THEN.

Koziol makes another claim which I do agree with, and that is that adverbs like in the past, in past years, in former years may include the present; that is, they can go with the perfect, as well as the preterit. This is surprising in that such adverbs would seem, on the surface, to refer to time that is over, not continuing, and yet examples like In past years I have been in England many times are
perfectly good. Evidently it is possible for "past years" to be considered part of an ongoing series, including the present year.\(^{10}\)

Koziol states further (p. 504) that the adverb once "almost always" takes the past tense. He gives the example It was a cathedral once but takes note of one of Dietrich's examples that has the perfect: Anyone can see that she has been pretty once. This I find somewhat odd;\(^{11}\) for me, once is a THEN-time, though I would not say it is a definite time.

Just now is also said to refer to past time (p. 505); however, besides Koziol's example He did it just now, it seems possible to say I've just now received word that they've arrived safely.

Among the adverbs that Koziol lists as requiring the perfect rather than the preterit are up till now, so far, as yet, not yet, since then; we could add for the last two days, these five years past and others.\(^{12}\)

If we assemble the various adverbials according to their cooccurrence capacities with the preterit and present perfect, we come up with three groupings, represented below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>+THEN</th>
<th>+THEN</th>
<th>-THEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>long ago</td>
<td>long since</td>
<td>at present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>five years ago</td>
<td>in the past</td>
<td>up till now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>once [=formerly]</td>
<td>once [=one time]</td>
<td>so far</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yesterday</td>
<td>today</td>
<td>as yet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the other day</td>
<td>in my life</td>
<td>not yet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>those days</td>
<td>for three years</td>
<td>during these five years past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>last night</td>
<td>today</td>
<td>herewith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in 1900</td>
<td>recently</td>
<td>lately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at 3:00</td>
<td>just now</td>
<td>as of now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after the war</td>
<td>often</td>
<td>since the war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>always</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>never</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>already</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>before</td>
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</tbody>
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1. The reader may not agree with every entry; there seems to be some genuine variation by geographic and social parameters; for instance, British English seems to prefer that just and already go only with the perfect. We will consider this variation in Chapter 6. On since, see Fijn van Draat (1910, 1912).

2. Not all the -THEN adverbials are compatible with the present tense: *During these last five years, he spends/is spending all his summers abroad. Hence we cannot simply identify -THEN adverbs as "present", as is done by some theorists, especially of the XN group.

3. It is possible, as stated earlier, for adverbs like last night (+THEN) to go with the present perfect when they are subsumed under an overall period which includes the MOC: I've tried to reach them last night and this morning, but so far without success. This inclusion is automatic in since last night.

4. Many refinements await adverb classification. In the case of still, for example, it is compatible with the present tense and preterit of stative verbs, but not with verbs like arrive (except in the non-temporal sense "anyway"); it is not compatible with the positive present perfect, but is with the negative perfect. Similarly, in three years. Yet seems uncomfortable in negative indicative sentences. (He didn't come yet) but acceptable in the interrogative (Did he come yet?) where, as Bolinger (1968) notes (p. 123), there hardly seems to be a difference from Has he come yet?

4.7. It was suggested casually in the preceding chapter that the contrast between "then"-time (THEN) and "extended now"-time (XNOW) could be compared with the opposition between the demonstratives that and this; that is, THEN = that time and XNOW = this time. This was
intended to promote the claim that both preterit and perfect are capable of referring to definite time periods. There is an important difference from the way demonstratives are most often used, however. Given, say, two books lying on a table, it is generally thought an objective matter for the speaker to choose to say this book or that book: all he has to do is look at the position of the books with respect to himself and determine which is in fact nearer to him and which farther away. Cf. Partee (1973b):

...demonstratives (for example, this, that, here, there, now, I, you in "you big") do not contribute to the meaning of a sentence by virtue of having a meaning or a sense of their own. Rather, for each demonstrative there is some kind of associated algorithm which, given the linguistic context of the demonstrative in the sentence and the linguistic and extralinguistic context in which the sentence occurs, picks out certain objects in or properties of the whole context as referent of the demonstrative. (p. 416)

However, when we come to talking of "this time" or "that time" we are not able to make the choice from any simple algorithm comparable to that applicable to spatial deixis. Temporal reference is, in this sense, nonobjective, and is probably not a matter of referring at all. In the last chapter, we mentioned that some definite noun phrases seem not to refer either, but only to serve the function of attributing a certain description to a posited entity. It appears that thinking of an event as part of XNOW, the past of "this time" is in a similar sense an act of attribution than reference.

Having pointed, in Section 3.3., to some instances where the perfect distribution seemed to correspond to the distribution of the phrase this time, I must acknowledge that such a correlation is not complete. For example, the phrase this last year in this last year we
really had a tough time does not force the use of the perfect. Clearly there is no direct equivalence between this-phrases and -THEN adverbials. In fact, adverbials containing this have a rather odd distribution, as Huddleston (1969) observed:

this morning can be past or present but not future...; this evening...can be present or future but hardly past... this Tuesday can be past or future but scarcely present ...; whereas this afternoon/spring etc. can refer to past, present, or future time. (p. 800)

We may not agree with all these strictures (He's going to leave later this morning, I've had a great time this evening), but the point remains that we should not expect the surface demonstratives of an adverbial to match neatly with the time-frame of the verb in all cases--especially where the form of the adverb is relatively frozen. (The reader is also referred back to footnote 12.)

4.8. The fact that +THEN adverbs may sometimes be subordinated to an explicit or implicit -THEN reference is important in the explanation of certain examples noticed by Jespersen, Zandvoort, and others, in which a when-clause is combined with the present perfect. These are usually interpreted as iterative.\(^{15}\)

When I have been in London...

When I have asked a policeman the way...

The +THEN conjunction when appearing with the -THEN verb form, the present perfect, should be incompatible--in Diver's words, a "signal incompatibility" should appear. But if the when is read as referring

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to more than one "when", as iterative, then it no longer need be only +THEN, because a series of "when's" may well extend to the MOC; and so the conflict is resolved. It is not enough to say that in these cases, when is simply equivalent to whenever (+THEN), because this does not explain why when appearing with the perfect is usually read as whenever,16 while this preference is not evident if when appears with the preterit. Compare:

(The one time) when I was in London, I had a crummy hotel.

(The few times) when I was in London, I (always had a crummy hotel.

*(The one time) when I have been in London, I've had a crummy hotel.

(The few times) when I have been in London, I've had crummy hotels.

There is a possible instance of a single-event assertion being acceptable, if it is understood as

?The one time when I have ever been in London...

or better

The one time that I have ever been in London...

which seems to allow either preterit or perfect follow-on clauses:

...I was/I've been treated royally.

Presumably the occasion of being treated royally is coreferential to that of being in London (therefore definite), yet this is not sufficient to prevent the perfect from appearing.17

But in the interrogative, both preterit and perfect may readily occur:

When have you ever been in London?
When were you ever in London?
Neither of these particularly favors the iterative reading; in fact, there seems to be a slight tendency in the opposite direction. Koziol expresses this more strongly; speaking of

When have you ever been satisfied?

When were you ever satisfied?

he says the former means (p. 503) "when before now" and the latter, "when at a point of past time"—suggesting reference to an "unknown, but presume: definite" time reference. As we remarked earlier, this could also apply to the perfect, since the state of being satisfied must be assumed to have occurred at a time, whether known or not.

"Presumed definiteness" doesn't present much of a contrast with the perfect. Nor is this explanation very helpful with

I have never been satisfied.

I was never satisfied.

in which it is clear that the only sense in which the preterit exhibits greater "definiteness" is by referring to a period now over, and hence slightly narrowed down, though possibly only very slightly.\textsuperscript{18}

An interesting case of when with the perfect appears in the Prolog of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, from which we extract:

When that Aprill with his shoures soote [sweet]
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote,
And bathed every veyne [vein] in swich [such] licour
Of which vertu [strength] engendred is the flour [flower];
...
Thanne longen folk to goon [go] on pilgrimages,
...
And specially from every shires ende
Of Engeland to Cauterbury they wende,
The hooly blisful martir for to seke
That hem [them] hath holpen [helped] whan that they
were seeke [sick].
...

\textsuperscript{18}
In the first part, the perfect is within the *when*-clause, like our earlier examples; the perfect in the last part is in the matrix clause. The combination of factors converges on an iterative generic sense in the following manner.

By itself, *when* that April...*hath perced* could refer to a singular event in the future (in a context like "then shall I go..."); but the presence of *thanne longen folk* in the present tense rules this out and forces the reading "whenever". When we get down to *hath holpen* the iterative information from above determines the interpretation here, too: *hath holpen* could have been singulative, possibly even with the following *when*-clause (containing a preterit). Compare: *Has he ever helped you?* Well, he has helped me once *when I was sick* though the latter is slightly odd (very odd if we change it to *Well, he has helped me last winter when I was sick*). Note also that *hath holpen* is not likely to be interpreted statively—cf. *He seems helped* (when he was...). The outcome is a reading of iterated events continuing up to the present.

4.9. So far we have been talking mostly about relations between adverbs and tenses, though we have made occasional reference to another factor of importance, and that is the "character" of the events themselves—do they take time, are they but momentary, is there an ongoing development or process, is there only an unchanging state? A number of grammarians
have remarked that the so-called "continuative" perfect seems to be found with stative verbs like know, exist, see, but not ordinarily with active verbs like walk, fall, decide. Another distinction can be made between phenomena which may continue indefinitely (in principle) such as walk, sleep, study, and other phenomena which embody a point of completion or culmination, like decide, waken, drown. The first kind of verbal expressions have been called "atelic", that is, not goal-defined, the latter kind then being "telic" or goal-defined. The difference is that if an atelic-type event is broken off or interrupted at any point in the course of development, we can still say that the event has taken place, but if such an interruption occurs with a telic-type event, then we cannot say that the event has taken place. Thus if someone was swimming (atelic), and then broke off, we are still entitled to say he swam or he has swum; but if someone was drowning (telic), but was rescued, we cannot say he drowned or he has drowned.

The property of telicness is not just a property of verbs, however. There are many other contributing elements, so that we should perhaps speak more properly of telic and atelic expressions or sentences. Macaulay (1971), Dowty (1972), Kittredge (1969), King (1969), and Verkuyl (1971) among others have shown how telic expressions may change into atelic ones, and vice versa, depending on the presence of these various elements. We note some of the possibilities below.

An expression like John has written may be understood as equivalent to "John has been a writer", in which case it is atelic; on the other hand, it may fit in the context Has he written them (a letter/ note/request yet? as a telic expression. The explicit addition of a

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singular specific direct object\textsuperscript{21} forces the telic reading: John has written a new book; unless an iterative adverbial expression appears John has written a new book each year to provide an atelic (or "de-telicized") reading via repetition. A similar function is served by the use of the progressive verb forms John has been writing a new book (which may be iterative, i.e. "a new book each year" but need not be), where "to be writing a new book" can describe an endless labor. Or again, the negative eliminates the end-point from the assertion: John hasn't written a new book. On the other side, the addition of a "verb particle" often renders an atelic expression into a telic one: John used the red ink does not assert that his use came to a necessary halt, as John used up the red ink does. Similarly with adverbs of direction and goal: John drove towards town is atelic, John drove to town telic, so John drove to town for two hours is bad—unless meaning "John repeatedly drove to town for two hours".\textsuperscript{22} Even the subject nominal plays a role. The guests arrived from town for two hours is fine, since the continuity of the event (and the compatibility with a durative adverb) takes the form of repeated arrivals. Thus a series of telic events constitutes an atelic one. We will consider how these variations affect the interpretation of the perfect below.\textsuperscript{23}

Bauer (1970a) observes that the typical examples of what is often called the "continuative" perfect contain an atelic expression, that is, either a state or a durative action: He has lived in London since 1950. The presence of the adverb is crucial, as well, since if we eliminate it, the expression behaves as if it were telic: the period of "living in London" is understood to have come to an end. (Cf. Chapter 2, Sec. 7)
This would then be a case of what Zandvoort called the "experiential perfect". (Bauer rightly considers these names for different types of perfects to actually be names for "combinatory variants" of the perfect (p. 194), which are the sum of all the elements which contribute to a particular interpretation of the basically invariant meaning of the perfect.) Even *He has lived in London since 1950* may be an "experiential perfect" however; adding an adverb like occasionally promotes this reading. Bauer says the ambiguity of the sentence comes from the ambiguity of the adverbial phrase *since 1950*, but it is unnecessary to posit such an ambiguity for this and all similar adverbials, because the time-reference does not change; it is only the manner in which that time reference is interpreted to apply to each sentence, in each context, that changes, and this is not controlled by the adverb alone.

With a telic expression, the perfect may be read as a perfect of "current relevance", *We have won the game* (i.e. "We are the winners"). On the other hand, "we" may not be the winners at present; then the perfect is merely experiential. But again, if the event is interpreted to have happened more than once, then the reading may be called "continuous" by virtue of its repetition: *We have won the game for half a year straight* (i.e. "We have won every weekly game...") The same goes for *We have been winning*. It is even possible that "winning the game" might be considered more or less a steady state, like "being winners" (until, of course, the next loss), and in this sense, *We have won the game for half a year straight* would be a "literal" continuative perfect. Such possibilities of ambiguous (or perhaps vague) readings of events are actually more common than might be supposed, as we will
show in a moment. This makes it difficult to play the old game of distinguishing different "types" of perfects, and constitutes one more argument against identifying any of such variable meanings with the form of the perfect itself.

4.10 One such meaning attributed to the perfect that we have not discussed separately is that of "completion". This is most commonly thought of in connection with current relevance (the act has to be completed for its results to show—at least for expressions of telic nature), but it is worth considering on its own for a moment. Curme (1935, p. 358) begins his description of the perfect by saying that it "represents an act as completed at the present moment: 'I have just finished my work': 'I have written a long letter to Father'." Poutsma (1926), in a similar vein, says

What distinguishes the perfect from the present is that the former represents the action or state as having, for the time being, come to a conclusion, while the latter implies that it will continue in the future. (p. 210)

The reason for Poutsma's rather peculiar choice of words is that he wants to make room for sentences like I have been writing a letter, which does not assert that the letter got finished, nor that it is in a finished state. Poutsma tries to get by with a sort of "partial completion":

there is, indeed, no reference to any definite result having been obtained, but yet the sentence distinctly implies that the letter is in a more or less advanced stage
towards completion. The very fact that it indicates an unfinished state of the letter and, consequently, fore-
shadows a continuation of the act of writing, brings the present even more distinctly to the mind than is done by
I have written a letter. (ibid.)

Apparently Poutsma will have his cake and eat it too. Either we may say that completion applies to the whole of an event (an event of writing a letter through to its end), or we may say that completion applies to each successive phase by which the event becomes successively accomplished. But this reduces the idea of completion to triviality, since anything which happens, to any degree or extent, will also be "completed" to that extent. It is important to distinguish those kinds of events which don't "count" as completed until they have gone all the way to their normal points of terminus, from those kinds of events which do not have this goal-limited (telic) character—or rather, we must distinguish the verbal expressions which have one sense or the other (viz. to have written a letter vs. to have been writing a letter). If we do not do this, we run the risk of confounding the idea of "having occurred" with "having gone to completion, having finished" which are not at all the same, and which moreover are quite independent of the perfect form itself, as Bryan (1936) observed:

any examination of the verbs employed makes clear that the idea of completion is an essential element of the character of the verbs themselves and that the notion of completion is just as obvious in the preterite or future tense as in the perfect; for example, "I shall finish my work next week," "I wrote a long letter to father," "Time will modify our most firmly held opinions." (p. 376)

Bauer (1970a) is only partly right in making the interpretation of completion contingent on the telic/atelic nature of the verb:
When a telic verb appears in the perfect the action is understood to be, at the point of reference, an accomplished fact in the sense that the goal implied in the meaning of the verb has been reached: *I have persuaded him*, i.e. the act of persuading has been successfully concluded, he is now persuaded (NOW being in this case the point of reference). (p. 192)

This fails to deal with *I have persuaded him* once already, but he may have lost heart and need another talking-to. Certainly he was in a state of persuasion directly after my urging, but this need not be the case now. "telic verbs just happen to allow for the "present completion" reading, they do not require it. Bauer treads dangerous ground in saying the function of the perfect with atelic verbs is the same:

What is expressed is again that an action anterior to a certain point of reference is...an accomplished fact, except that...there is of course no implication of the action having reached any goal... (p. 192)

Since the telic quality of the verb does not insure the CR reading, and since moreover the telic quality is not an exclusive property of individual verbs, but results from various factors we have been discussing, it is difficult to see what purpose is served by calling the perfect the bearer of the meaning of completion.

4.11. We may note, incidentally, that the likelihood of the present completion reading, or of its close cousin, the current results reading, depends not only on what kind of a sequel the conclusion of an event may be normally expected to bring, but also on how long that sequel may be expected to be in force. For example, "winning a game" usually
means that subsequently there are winners of that game; similarly, puncturing the ball means that there is, for a time anyway, a punctured ball somewhere around. But pushing a button does not mean that there is a button in a pushed state for some time thereafter, in the sense of a fairly durable change of state (unless, of course, the button gets stuck). Nor does knocking on a door mean that there is afterwards a knocked-on door in any physical sense. In these cases, the meaning of "current relevance" would have to be extremely abstract (as perhaps, I've knocked on the door implying "so someone should be coming any minute", or contrariwise "but no one seems to be home", depending on circumstances), and in fact could hardly be differentiated from the experiential perfect. But this is merely to repeat objections I have made before.

If we say I've just burned my finger it will be considered distinctly odd if we segue with but it's healed already. It seems a central part of the function of the adverb just to indicate that the act is of sufficient recency--whatever "recent" may count as in objective time--that the inferred result-state may correctly be inferred to hold at the MOC. This is not quite absolute, however, as we can use such present inferences specifically to deny them, that is, to contrast what would rightly be expected to be the present case with what is really the case, e.g. You know, I've just cleaned the house and those kids have messed it up again already.

If we revise the example given previously to I've burned my finger this week (I wonder what other bad luck is going to befall me), it is not at all clear whether the speaker is implying that the finger
is still injured; still less so with I've burned my finger (once) already during football season (so I've got to watch out against doing it again and being out of more games). Indeed, the latter, given the fact that we would not ordinarily consider it relevant to place the event in a time period which is significantly larger than that necessary to encompass the actual time of the event (that is, we would not ordinarily say I've burned my finger this year already if we were referring to an event of the last few hours or days26), the inference would usually be that the event is placed somewhere vaguely toward the beginning of the longer period cited, and in turn, that the burning should by now have restored itself.

It is to be noted that all these vagaries of the "presumed lifespan" of states apply equally to expressions with the preterit, viz I just burned my finger/I burned my finger this week/I burned my finger (once) already during football season. The choice of tense has little or no direct effect on the interpretation of current state, except insofar as the preterit is perhaps statistically prevalent with more distant time references, since it becomes more and more likely that, as the act "ages" into an "older" event, it will be thought of as belonging to THEN time rather than XNOW.

There is one set of adverbs which signify such "extreme recency", that it appears to be a contradiction to deny the current persistence of results. These are as of now, herewith, at this moment, and especially, now itself, plus a few others. When one of these is used any resultant state, whatever it be, must currently hold: *I have now cleaned the house and those kids have messed it up again already.
Apparently such statements function as an announcement of the completion of the respective acts involved, so that no lapse of time is being countenanced which would allow a change of the immediately-resulting state.

4.12. With all these things in mind, we will look at the breakdown of perfect meanings given by Dillon (1973, pp. 277-78):

(a) when a clause is \ [+durative \], interpretation is 'continuing until now':

The money has lasted (two months).

(b) when clause is \ [+momentary \], interpretation is usually 'happening at least once before now':

He has sneezed.

(c) when clause is \ [+momentary \(+durative \), interpretation is 'iterative' ('happening repeatedly before now'):

He has sneezed for two days.

(d) when clause is \ [+completive \], interpretation is as in (b):

The lake has frozen.
(There is an assumption if the interpretation is 'once before now' that the completed state continues 'until now'.)

(e) when clause is \ [+completive \(+durative \), interpretation is as in (d) except that the period of duration of result may continue beyond 'now' into future:

The lake has frozen for two months.
The shop has closed for two weeks.
He has gone to London for two weeks.

In case (a), we know from earlier commentary that "continuing until now" need not mean "continuing unbroken until now", that there may be
several sub-periods involved; but even if only one instance of the
money's lasting is in evidence, it is not absolutely necessary that
there still be money left at the MOC, though this is the most likely
interpretation. Case (b) involves an event ("sneezing") which is not
only telic, but which does not bring about a patent change of state.
By itself, He has sneezed carries no conventional implication about
the state of affairs following sneezing. (This may be modified to fit
particular cases: if Aunt Maud only sneezes when there's a cat around,
or loses all her hair pins when she sneezes, then the present inference
from Maud's sneeze is that "there is a cat somewhere nearby" or that
"Maud's hair will have to be done up again".) In case (c), the combina-
tion of a telic verb with a durative adverb yields the interpretation
of iterativity; this also satisfies the time-period reference of the
perfect. Regarding (d), Dillon apparently understands "completive"
verbs to be change-of-state verbs, but it is not necessary that the
lake be presently frozen. Actually, if we take the reference to be
"once previously", we ordinarily would understand it to be less likely
that the frozen state is still with us. In this, "once" contrasts
with other implied references such as "just this morning", which would
promote the likelihood of present frozenness.

Finally, in case (e) there are various possibilities. One
reading is equivalent to "the lake has repeatedly frozen for two
months now", in which case it is equivalent to (c); another possi-
bility is approximately I recall the lake has frozen for up to two
months running"--the only difference is that the period for two months
is not "pegged" to the MOC, and the statement counts then as experiential,
like (b), though (b) may be noniterative, while (e) with its durative adverb seems necessarily iterative.

But there is another pair of readings for (e), in which the adverbial identifies not the period of instances of freezing, but rather the duration of the state ensuing\textsuperscript{27} from the event indicated. (This only works with events that entail a literal change of state, as we shall see.) In these cases, the events themselves need not be iterative. Consider He has gone to London for two weeks: the most common reading would be "he has gone to London and is supposed to stay there for two weeks" but it could also mean singulative action: "he has gone to London for two weeks only once that I know of", or plural: "he has gone to London several times for two-week stays". The latter two interpretations would be experiential; it is a little harder to say what the first is. Presumably it would count as (d), with "continuing state".

These readings where the adverb applies to the state are difficult to obtain with The lake has frozen for two months. This is so because states of nature are normally not bound to schedules such as would enable us to say The lake has frozen and is supposed to stay that way for a total of two months.

This kind of reading is also difficult to get with the wide variety of acts that do not leave effects of some stability and durability. The shop has closed for two months is both a "schedulable" and relatively stable kind of event expression. But to say I have knocked on the door for two months does not (normally!) establish that the door has been left in a recognizably "knocked-on" state (unless

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the speaker is King Kong, perhaps); a *fortiori* it is not the case that
one can leave the door "knocked-on" for a good week or two. This being
so, the only readings available seem to be those where for two months
applies to the event--making the reading iterative, like (c).

The fact that *freeze* entails a resultant state of frozenness--
for unspecified time--while *knock* does not entail a resultant condition
of "knockedness" is quite independent of the perfect: these differences
apply to any other tense form as well, including the preterit.

In fact, all the various interpretations of the perfect we have
been discussing here as laid out by Dillon are independent of the
perfect. They reflect the various ways in which the perfect is made
consonant with the panoply of event-types, objects, manners, and
pragmatic presuppositions, which are involved in the construction of
sentences. Many different types of implications "fit" the perfect, and
certain ones are more or less regularly attached to specific semantic/
grammatical subclasses. But none of these meanings of completion,
iteration, state, or what have you is internal to the meaning of the
perfect itself; nor external to the preterit.
4.13. In view of the complexity of factors contributing to iterative, stative, and other readings of predicates, it is not surprising that examples collected from a corpus of texts show a considerable amount of ambiguity, even vagueness. Two studies giving such examples are Ota (1963) and Dubois (1972). Both profess XN theory, Debois from Ota, and Ota from Bryan and Uldall.

Consider from Ota:

The strident questions which have taken me back, in the past few months, to a review of some of our decisions of national policy in these few years. (p. 44)

Have the questions taken me back once, twice, or have I been in constant thrall to them in a state of mental bondage, as it were?

For the past several years our death rate has approached 40,000 per year here in the United States. (ibid.)

Has the death rate approached 40,000 repeatedly over several individual years, or is the rate a sort of steady-state phenomenon over the whole period?

In recent years these dollars haven't been as available to some of the countries as they would like to have it. (p. 45)

Is the lack of availability of dollars constant or intermittent, a continuous or interrupted state?

But certainly and consistent with what I've said previously, that it's our, that we'll make an earnest effort to preserve the seat of Nationalist China. (sic, ibid.)

How many times have we said previously, or is the sense more like "we have maintained previously", which may refer to a state of belief or opinion?

Dubois provides many more examples of the difficulty, though she
makes a concerted effort to put each example in one category only. Her categories are three, reflecting what she calls the "secondary meanings" or "overtones" associated with the perfect: these are "single action", "iterative", and "continuative". "Continuative" applies only to states, or to actions which have no implicit point of conclusion (i.e. which are atelic, in terms discussed earlier, like sleep). "Iterative", on the other hand, applies to goal-defined (telic) actions (like fall asleep), and also to interrupted or broken states (I have often been tired). Dubois recognizes ambiguity in

The storms of the past had died away... (p. 50)

where the choice seems to be between single action (all dying away at once) or iterative (dying away one by one). A case of single action/continuative confusion is

Our surplus from foreign business transactions has in recent years fallen substantially short of the expenditures we make abroad... (ibid.)

Dubois asks:

Does the writer intend the meaning that the surplus has fallen in each of the recent years, or that, considering the recent years as a group, the surplus has gradually fallen from an initial high to a present low? The ambiguity between single action and continuative is apparently illusory [sic!], being more a function of the type of lexical verb rather than of the perfect. (ibid.)

Actually, Dubois seems to be confused about her own terms. The reading in which the surplus has fallen in each of the recent years would properly fall under the category "iterative"; if we are talking about an overall fall from high to low, we envision a "single action"—but possibly also a continuous state of decline?

Another example,
And so the young minister resigned, to go and study and pray, having never passed a day, he told his parishioners, when "I did not gain from you far more than I ever gave to you". (p. 54)

is classed by Dubois as "iterative", though she has previously stated that

The presence of a single negative element...determines the overtone of the perfect [as] semantically continuative. Since the presence of a single negative element indicates that the action does not take place, the predication is referred to the entire time period. (pp. 10-11)

And in another case,

...the Secretary of State has not only reiterated the United States' profound attachment to the alliance... [but] has also solemnly repeated a warning... (p. 56)

it is quite possible that the reiteration is an event of more than one occurrence, though Dubois lists it as "single action".

4.14. In the chapter just concluded we have developed the "extended now" theory of the perfect which was sketched in previous chapters by way of rebuttal to the theories critiqued in those chapters. We pointed out several authors who advocate the theory to some extent, but found that it is almost always confused with the other theories, which are typically considered more or less interchangeable with it. We presented the views of the least encumbered advocate of XN theory, Bryan (1936), who dismisses all other meanings proposed as intrinsic to the
perfect—"current relevance", "indefiniteness", "iteration", etc. (His arguments on these meanings were presented in place in previous chapters, except for the one concerning "completion", a variety of current relevance, which is discussed separately here because of its connection with telicness in the verb, a subject dealt with in this chapter.) At this point we began to look more closely into particular linguistic elements which influence the interpretation of events and their relationships to one another, and so influence the interpretation of the preterit and perfect. The first and major item of interest was the category of temporal adverbs, some of which have restrictions against one or the other tense, others not. This led us to propose a categorization in terms of a feature _THEN_; qualifications of this plan were discussed, as well as various types of apparent exceptions, such as _when_-phrases appearing with the perfect in an iterative sense. Then we discussed various other syntactic and semantic phenomena related to whether a verb is telic or not (expressing a "goal-defined" activity), whether there are other elements influencing the telicness of the whole assertion, whether there is a stative interpretation, and whether there is a well-defined result normally entailed by the event. All these factors were seen to play a role in determining how the preterit/perfect opposition is interpreted in any given example.
FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER 4

1. Another "mixed" theory is that of Kruisinga & Erades (1953), who espouse a basically XN view of the preterit (expressing events "definitely and entirely separated in the mind of the speaker from the present" (p. 212)), but indulge in a four-way division of the perfect into resultative, continuative, experiential, and one called the "present-perfect" as in you've got problems, which appears to be not different in meaning from the pure present you have problems (pp. 225-29).

Palmer (1968) makes a particularly close identification between CR and XN ideas. He inquires after the reasons for choosing the perfect:

'Why is the activity placed in the period of time indicated by the present perfect rather than the period indicated by the simple past, since it occurred within them both?' It is here that we must refer to current relevance. A period of time that includes the present is chosen precisely because there are features of the present that directly link it to past activity. The temporal situation being envisaged by the speaker is one that includes the present; the present perfect is, therefore, used. (p. 74)

We want to say that "features of the present" may well lead the speaker to his choice, but this is not the same thing as saying that the perfect denotes such features; what the perfect denotes is the inclusive time span.

Poutsma (1926) is basically of the XN school;

When the predication referred to falls within a certain undefined space of time not distinctly thought of as severed from the moment of speaking, the perfect appears to be the normal tense. (p. 259)

He also gets in an ID note ("undefined space of time") and later retreats to CR:

When lately denotes a point of time, the ordinary tense is the preterite, but also the perfect is quite frequently used, apparently for the secondary purpose of indicating a result. (p. 264)

Yet another factor is brought in by Poutsma, "completion." This will be discussed in a later section.

2. Subjectivity is not intended here as an operative symbol of the use of the perfect, rather as a reminder that the speaker is not bound by any external, objective circumstance to conceptualize the inclusive past or the exclusive past, and so to utter one verb form or the other. We have specifically rejected talking about conceptualizations which do not show themselves in choice of form. The unfortunate consequences

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of "liberating" conceptualization from form, at least in the area of
our concern, can be illustrated from Kruisinga & Erades' (1935) expla-
nation of the differences between English and Dutch speakers in the use
of the perfect and preterit. English narratives generally use the
preterit (she lay contentedly on her back), expressing "a positive
gulf... between present and past time" (p. 213). But Dutch narratives
often use the perfect, and since Kruisinga and Erades maintain that
the meaning of the perfect form in Dutch is very much like that of
English, they turn to the psychology of the Dutch speaker as the source
of the difference. Addressing the example Hebt u beeld, jongeheer
Philip? (lit. "Have you rung, master Phillip?") they claim that Dutch
uses the perfect because "the verbal idea is simply not thought of as
connected with the present time" (p. 213) while the English would
impose the "positive gulf" mentioned above. Curiously, this subtle
distinction is immediately contravened:

The linguistic consciousness of the Dutch, or rather their
subconscious mind... works differently in this case: they
use a narrative perfect here, because to them there is a
connection with the present time... The use of the two
different ways of expression in English and Dutch is
determined, as the reader will have grasped, by subjective
and intuitive factors; prescriptive "rules" which the
student need only diligently learn by heart so as to "apply"
them correctly are... impossible. (pp. 213-14)

There is no comment about the fact that almost all the examples of
Dutch narrative perfect are instances of dialog, while narrative
preterits are drawn from expository and descriptive passages. In
spoken Dutch, the only past tense normally used is the perfect, so there
really is no opposition with the preterit, and no good reason to talk
about the mental processes of speakers "choosing" the perfect. The
error Kruisinga and Erades have made is in failing to distinguish the
basically literary (and archaic) system, which works on XN principles
pretty much like English, from the colloquial system, which neutralizes
the opposition in favor of the perfect. Attempting to apply the binary
semantic opposition of literature to the single colloquial form requires
some fancy psychologizing footwork of no explanatory value. (This crit-
icism also applies to Poutsma (1926) p. 257.)

3. Oddly enough, Dietrich himself, in the course of criticizing CR
today asks:

[G] Can the use of a verb rest upon such an unsure basis as
real or imagined effects? One can always construct such
relationships between past and present on the basis of
context; but are they intrinsic to the verb form? (p. 152)

This question is at the heart of our whole argument. Kron (1896)
reasoned that since native speakers hardly ever show much confusion over
whether to use the perfect or preterit, the difference must be a basi-
cally simple one, [G] "one which has not the remotest relationship to

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the abstract and metaphysical notions and rules of our grammarians" (p. 72). The exact relationship of the perfect to other forms in the sequence of child acquisition is not settled; Pflaum (1971) found the preterit and present perfect "easiest of all forms tested" (p. 93); she did not find out whether there was a difference in the way preterit and perfect were understood, however. Kypriotaki (1974) found that the perfect was involved with "the majority of ungrammatical responses" and was the element most frequently omitted (p. 94). In any case, children do not seem to get very far toward adult speech before making active use of both preterit and perfect in normal patterns of opposition; the difference cannot be as arcane as some grammarians have portrayed it.

4. Poutsma (1926, p. 260) gives a number of similar examples:

I have made the same remark when I was younger.

I need not to swear that oath, for I have sworn it long ago.

All these instances have been given in Notes and Queries many years ago.

I have been to Richmond last Sunday.

These mountains have been to a considerable extent explored by the present writer in 1892.

Poutsma comments:

observant reading will soon bring to light a goodly number of instances...Nor can it be urged that the English in which such instances are met with is of questionable purity. (ibid.)

Indeed, since they come from such luminaries as Sheridan, Ch. Brontë, Galsworthy, and reputable newspapers, among others. Yet Poutsma is not content merely to admit such examples without scrutiny:

in almost all of them the adjunct denoting the epoch of the past has back-position or is, at least, placed after the predicate. It is, indeed, not improbable that deviation from the ordinary [NB] practice is in the majority of cases due to this fact: the speaker starting to make a statement without any clear thought of a past epoch, the latter occurring to him almost by way of an after-thought as he approaches the conclusion. (ibid.)

Thus the rule of adverbial/tense concord does not come into play until it is too late to do anything about the verb.

The fact remains that the examples were considered abnormal by Poutsma, and I must concur.
Other examples of the sort are:

One member of the group has actually served as a
Fullbright scholar in Burma a few years ago. (Ota,
(1963) p. 46)

We have seen other such situations since, and some of
them not so long ago. (ibid.)

Vanneck (1958) discusses some similar cases (...as I have predicted to
you two years ago...) as a "hypercorrect use of the perfect" committed
by Americans, who seem generally to be favoring the preterit at the
expense of the perfect (p. 240), and are, he suggests, becoming unsure
about the correct use of the perfect. This does not explain the
earlier examples taken from British letters, however.

Crystal (1966) notes that his 40 British informants chose predominantly
the perfect to go with lately, with a frequency in the 81-90% range
(p. 18).

6. With states, "iterativity" is interpreted by Stock to mean "existing
over a period of time"; "singularity" to mean "existing at one time";
cf. p. 233.

7. The feature PAST stands for compatibility with the preterit, but
does not distinguish compatibility with the perfect. A +PAST adverb
goes with the preterit, but not with the present tense; a -PAST adverb
is just the opposite. Both adverbs may go with the perfect.

8. According to Hausmann (1972, pp. 54-56) the medial position dis-
tinguishes preterit-type adverbs of tense from perfect-type adverbs:

Paul has recently taken work.

*Paul yesterday took a job.

This contrast does not seem very general, however: Paul long ago gave
up looking for a job is acceptable.

9. Other American speakers may not think so. Vanneck (1958) gives
various examples of the "hypercorrect use of the perfect in written
American English" (p. 752); Visser (1966) opines that "this is perhaps
one of the numerous syntagmata that went over to the U.S.A. as 'Mayflower
English' and there survived" (p. 752).

10. Curme (1925, p. 284) cites: It was one of those epidemic frenzies
which have fallen upon great cities in former ages. At first blush,
one might consider this example to pose a difficulty for the KNOW
description of the perfect: how can it be compatible with an adverbial
like in former ages? Doesn't it always suggest a contrast with the
present age? Not necessarily. Past years, former ages, and the like
need not be taken *en bloc* as *THEN-time* only; they represent sets or series of periods, and do not need to contrast with the present, even though they are "before" the present: just as before, previously, in the past are no later than the MOC, and not always subdivided or split off from the MOC. Former ages does not seem to presuppose a clearly identified this age, as last year presupposes this year; it may say no more than in ages so far accounted for, and not be thought of as disjoint from the present: whence the inference from "frenzies which have already fallen" to "frenzies which may yet befall". The past is always prior to the MOC; but not every past adverbial also identifies a past prior to the present period.

11. Cf. another example of Koziol's: *It has been a cathedral in the past*, which seems more acceptable than *It has been a cathedral once*. But also: *it has been a cathedral at one time or another* (according to archaeological evidence).

12. Koziol includes for two days and these five years; but with these a further specification is required to select the perfect. It must be understood that reference is to "days including today" in *for two days: these must likewise specifically include the present year*. Contrast the following:

> These same five years that we lived in Samoa were the happiest of my life.

The same qualification applies to all these years (Ota (1963) p. 43).

Crystal (1966) does not deal directly with such ambiguities, since he starts out from a notional classification of "48 definably distinct time-situations", 34 of which require explicit adverbial specification (p. 7). Omission of an adverb usually leads to "temporal vagueness and hence ambiguity"; but though he notes that adverbs of class C4 (this morning, this afternoon, this evening, tonight, today) occur with both tense forms 2 and 3 (ie. the preterit and the present perfect), he does not comment on the differences of temporal meaning accompanying cooccurrence with 2 or with 3. Such differences might be inferred from the sets of meanings ascribed to 2 and 3 depending on their cooccurrence with specific types of adverbs. The general character of the preterit is to express "action seen as removed from the present, time either specified or unspecified" (*We enjoyed our stay (last week)*), while the perfect has various readings, including "action seen as recently completed, in unspecified past, removed from present", "action seen as very recently completed, in unspecified past, results usually perceivable", "past action, seen as recent in specified time" (*Lately I've been living in France*), "simultaneous perceivable activity" (in commentaries: *He's almost reached the goal*). (pp. 26-27)

The problem inherent to Crystal's approach is that it ignores all the other factors which may contribute to the *temporal structure* of a sentence, such as negation, use of the progressive, etc. These we discuss a bit later.
Petersen (1970, p. 5) gives a list of expressions that she found almost exclusively with the preterit. Some of them, like the following summer, the next day seem to be understood as regularly +THEN because of something like the Gricean principle discussed earlier that it would not be sufficiently responsive of the speaker to say the next day if that day were today; he should say today. Other items on Petersen’s list are debatable: for instance she gives when as a preterit-only marker, but as we will see shortly, this needs qualification.

13. Cf. Visser (1973, pp. 2193–94); but Defromont (1973) says "the combination just + preterit is frequent in the U.S. and gaining ground in Great Britain" (p. 105); Crystal (1966) gives the responses of 40 British informants as 42% preterit and 15% perfect in cooccurrence with already (the remainder in the present tense and pluperfect). More study needs to be done on a dialectal and sociolectal basis.

14. Ota (1963) observes:

Such time expressions as once, formerly, earlier, before, in the past, recently, which vaguely indicate some earlier time, occur both with simple past...and present perfect...and therefore, do not characterize the past tense forms as opposed to the present tense forms (which include present progressive and present perfect), but they do serve to characterize simple past as opposed to simple present, since the latter does not occur with them. (p. 25)

15. There is another possibility, which is that the present perfect is doing duty for a future perfect: When I (will) have been in London for a while, I’ll call you. This clearly refers to a (future) THEN time, so is not in conflict with the when marking.

16. Calver (1946) says that

Jespersen has neglected to discriminate between when ‘whenever, on every occasion that’ and when ‘on the occasion that’. In the examples [with perfect] which he quotes, when equals whenever; and the repetition is stated there [via adverbs], not implied in the verb form. (p. 32)

However, as we have tried to show, even without an explicit adverb of repetition, when appearing with the present perfect is regularly interpreted as whenever by the listener. Since the meaning of when is to this extent dependent on the tense-choice, the appeal to two different when’s is putting the cart before the horse.

17. Perhaps the following are more comfortable examples:

Name me one time when you have ever been satisfied.

Name me one time when you were ever satisfied.
In cases where ever or some other "overall period" marker is difficult to supply, the perfect will not work: even if the speaker is still a boy, he cannot announce, putting down a book he has just finished, *Now I can say I have read David Copperfield when I have (still) been a boy, but must say Now I can say I read?have read David Copperfield when I was (still) a boy.

18. As Bryan (1936) puts it in regard to iteratives:

the perfect tense...gives wider scope for the presentation of a repeated or habitual action than does the preterite, which cannot carry a survey as far as the present moment. (p. 375)

19. Garey (1957, p. 106) proposes the term "telic"; equivalent terms used by other writers on the subject are "conclusive" (Jespersen (1931, Part IV) p. 92), "cyclic" (Bull (1960) p. 17), "achievement" Ryle (1949) p. 119), "perfective" (Macaulay (1971) p. 110), "perfective" (Bauer (1970) p. 197), and "punctual" (King (1969) p. 183). Vendler (1967) uses two terms for such verbs, depending on whether they are for practical purposes instantaneous or momentary (i.e. consisting only of the terminus), or else have some stage of development associated with them. The former, like discover, forget, are called "achievement" verbs, the latter, like exhaust, learn, are called "accomplishment" verbs. (p. 102)


21. Binnick (1974) points out that the relation between a verb and its object varies as to whether all of the object or only part of it is presupposed to be affected, according to the nature of the subject, the verb, and the object. This difference is apparent in He loaded hay onto the truck/He loaded the truck with hay, and elsewhere.

22. But the telic expression John read the book can be converted to atelic by a similar adverb: John read the book for an hour.

23. We have expressed the idea informally before that most of the traditional and not so traditional ways of classifying perfects have been based on one or more of the factors we have just been discussing. A recent case in point is Gallagher (1969), who sets up the types below (I have added descriptive phrases in parentheses):

1. Perfective (single-telic predicates)

2. Durative
   a. Perfective (atelic, +continuing now)
   b. Imperfective (atelic, -continuing now)

3. Attributive (like Zandvoort's "experiential")

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Cf. pp. 48-51. Type 2a. is represented by John has worked at logic during the past year, in which "the state or action does not necessarily continue through the present"; type 2b. by John has played that sonata twice an hour for the past three hours, "in which the state or action does continue through the present." Yet "any of the sentences listed above might be construed as attributive, since it is simply a description of an accomplishment or characteristic of what is named by the surface subject...The reason for listing attribution separately...is that attribution seems to be the typical function of perfects of intransitive verbs." E.g. John has sung at the local church. (But what about John has sung hymns at the local church?)

24. Poutsma also entertains a paradox in examples where

there appears to be blending of momentaneousness and durativeness (or iterativeness); thus in: All the daily papers have taken lately to publishing a column about birds...To take is a distinctly momentaneous verb... yet the whole sentence has a durative purport... (p. 265)

Poutsma blames this situation on the "uncertainty attaching to the meaning of lately," but it really seems to be a case of iterated events constituting a series continuous with the present, and so compatible with the perfect, as we argued in Chapter 4, Section 6.

25. Generalized, this fact assumes importance in the elucidation of the historical development of the perfect as a true past tense—as we shall see in Chapter 6.

26. An exception would be, for example, where someone has been promised an inheritance if they do not wet the bed more than twice in a single year. Such a person might experience a night of incontinence and lament that fact with Well, I've now wet the bed once this year, I hope I can last for another month till the year is up.

27. For a similar reason, Fillmore (1972) argues that Peter put the beer in the icebox for three hours derives from "Peter caused the beer to be in the icebox for three hours", with a separate underlying verb representing the resulting state. This, however, requires a constraint to prevent two adverbs showing up at the same time: *Peter instantly put the beer in the icebox for three hours (p. 5). We may point out that the constraint is not absolute; we can say I'll put the beer in the icebox for a couple of hours at noon, so it'll be good and cold for the party.
Chapter 5
EMBEDDED PAST THEORY

5.1. In previous chapters, we have dealt with theories which are based on a direct confrontation of the perfect with the preterit and, to a lesser extent, with other tenses. The arguments in their support reflect an evaluation of the semantic content of the oppositions, and of particular patterns of cooccurrence within each form, chiefly patterns of adverb distribution. In the next pages we are going to turn our attention to a group of theories which arise from rather different considerations; they approach the perfect "from the outside looking in"—that is to say, they begin with certain principles which are thought to represent important generalizations about the structure of the verb system, and attempt to get the perfect to fit in with those principles. One major goal of these efforts is to reduce the surface heterogeneity of the auxiliary system by showing that, at some deeper level of analysis, the auxiliary constituents have much in common with "ordinary" verbs. This would mean that auxiliary have—the marker of the perfect—is really very much like main verb have, and that they are probably not distinct one from the other, at the level of deepest generality. The characteristic analysis is one which treats the perfect as a sort of compound structure, with an ordinary past tense (preterit) embedded in an ordinary present tense—whence the name for this chapter. The particular details of each embedded past (or EB) theory differ; for

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example Bach (1967) argues that have, regardless of its different superficial grammatical roles, is transformationally inserted in the course of derivation, while McCawley (1971) proposes that auxiliary have is in fact a full verb in underlying structure. Yet the different views seem to converge on an EB analysis, and it is in this light that we shall evaluate them. This means that we shall debate the more "technical" aspects of the theories only to the extent that is required for exposition; our real interest is in the semantic model of the perfect which for the most part remains implicit and undefended in EB theory. We shall find certain echoes of the other theories already discussed, especially CR theory, and an important part of our space will be devoted to determining how much EB theory has in common with those other theories. Where essential equivalence can be shown, we are spared the need to repeat criticisms and comments made earlier.

It should be noted that EB theory is a newcomer on the scene, being the development of scarcely more than the last decade, and is to be identified almost entirely with the growth of transformational/generative grammar. This identification explains much of the intricacy of the reasoning associated with EB theory, as well as a tendency to avoid considerations of semantic adequacy. It is a somewhat curious fact that EB theorists have shown little awareness of the semantic issues brought up by "traditional" grammarians, such as we have previously studied. Also curious is the fact that the traditional model of the perfect in its earliest historical form (represented by I have the letter written) is not unlike that of EB theory—yet nothing has previously been made of this. (We consider this similarity to be a
weakness of EB theory, since it does not account for the radical change in meaning undergone in the shift to I have written the letter, but this matter is deferred to the next chapter.) Perhaps this parochial-
ism reflects the transformationalist's general disregard for "messy"
contextual factors bearing on the interpretation of sentences—and, as we have seen, context is indispensable for understanding the perfect.
In any case, there is certainly sufficient "meat" in EB theory, as
variously expounded, for us to take it or its own terms. This is what we propose to do.

5.2. Before we address the representatives of EB theory individually, it may be of some value to review the "state of the art" in the trans-
formational treatment of the auxiliary as it was in its original
Chomskian formulation. We have not dwelt on the grammatical status of perfect—have to any great extent in previous discussion simply because traditional grammar did not enjoy a consensus on this point, and be-
cause the debates about categorization were not by themselves very revealing. Chomsky's formulation of the auxiliary did not offer much new insight into the semantic interrelationships among members of the constituent AUX (for short), but did provide a rather neat system for generating the correct permutations of surface output strings.
The base rule was

\[ \text{Aux} \rightarrow \text{Tense (Modal)} \ (\text{have -en}) \ (\text{be-ing}) \]

which has continued to appear in "standard-model" transformationalist writings virtually without modification.\(^1\) Given a base string, various transformational rules would apply to shift around and recombine the formatives into their ultimate surface forms. Such a treatment gave expression to the underlying constancy of elements making up the AUX, as well as accounting for the bewildering variety of actual surface realizations. Bach (1974) described the advantages of Chomsky's model:

There are very good reasons for separating out the underlined portions of the following English verbal phrases and considering the remainders independent constituents (in underlying structure):

- has been running
- may have tried to open the door
- opened the door
- opens the door

For example, we can describe verbs in terms of the constituents with which they can occur in the verb phrase and quite independently of whether they are in the past or present tense, whether their subjects are singular or plural, or whether they occur in the progressive (be + -ing), perfect (have + -en), or with modal verbs like can, must, will, may. Given the decision to separate out these elements and consider them possible developments of an abstract underlying element Aux, we can provide a very elegant analysis for several phenomena of English... (pp. 92-93)

The "very elegant analysis" provided, among other things, an orderly means of generating discontinuous elements such as have...-en; it made explicit allowance for the various possible surface word orders in questions and other inversions, while not concealing the underlying sameness of constituency; it recognized the "dummy verb" function of

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do as a bearer of tense when tense would otherwise lack a bearer; and more. None of these things could be done by traditional (phrase-
structure) grammars without resorting to cumbersome enumeration of possible surface strings, or to a mass of context-sensitive rules which would still fail to represent important underlying parallelisms.

Yet these improvements left many questions unresolved, both in the peculiarities of syntactic behavior of the various AUX components, and in the analysis of AUX semantics. With whetted appetites, analysts sought ways to incorporate more information into the model, to make it both more precise and more comprehensive. Perhaps the major general objection to the Chomskian formulation was that it ignored many similarities between the syntactic behavior of auxiliaries and that of the so-called "full" or "main" verbs. (Not to forget the "semauxiliaries" which stand somewhere between the two, such as in you need not go.) The question was, if these similarities are not fortuitous, how are they to be represented with maximum generality in the grammar?

One approach was to eliminate certain elements from underlying structure altogether, introducing them by subsequent transformational rule. Lyons (1965) suggested that

The 'verb have' in English may be regarded as a purely 'surface-structure' element...One advantage of treating have as a 'grammatical formative' (of multiple origin) in English is that the lower-level transformational rule for inversion, tag-questions, etc., can then be formulated to apply to the first 'non-lexical' element in the verb-phrase (without the addition of special conditions to enable it to apply to have, and be, as 'verbs'). (p. 230)

The technique was thus to keep the anomalous verbs out of derivations until a late stage, so that they would not "mess up" the general
application of rules; the peculiar nature of those verbs could be expressed in the very mechanisms required to withhold them until the right point. Bach (1967) developed this argument in greater detail, and we will consider his presentation shortly.

Another approach was based on just the opposite assumption: that all auxiliary elements start out as full verbs in underlying structure. Their peculiar limitations and constraints in the actual surface structures of English result from various interactions among lexical features, conditions on transformations, etc. Huddleston (1969) argues directly from a comparison of e.g. John intended coming tomorrow with John was coming tomorrow, claiming that compound verb forms (including the perfect) embody two underlying tense-choices. McCawley (1971), taking a cue from Hofmann's (1966) demonstration that some infinitival perfects actually are substituting for underlying preterits, revises Ross's (1967) model of auxiliaries as hierarchically embedded structures, and treats all perfects as embedded past structures.

The above sketch is intended to show that GB theory is but one, rather indirect, product of an elaborate debate on the form of grammars which has continually occupied the thinking of generativist grammarians. We have chosen to avoid entering very deeply into the details of the debate, realizing that its relatively arcane language may remain opaque to the reader, but hoping that we have managed to isolate those portions which bear on our main topic.
5.3. Bach (1967) proposed that the verbs have and be, in all their forms as surface main verbs as well as auxiliaries, do not appear in underlying structure, but are transformationally inserted. His argument for this treatment primarily concerns making the base more "universal", less language-specific, by eliminating elements—such as have and be—for which many languages lack surface analogs. He claims that this motivation, which is extrinsic to the description of English on its own terms, is nevertheless supported by indications internal to English that a superior description of English can be afforded by excluding have and be from the base. It is only after these criteria have been argued to be satisfied that Bach attempts to see if such a description holds up in semantic terms as well.

The main advantages of the insertion analysis, strictly from the English standpoint, were in brief that it allowed noun phrases with "reduced relative clauses" to be more simply described and more directly related to other types of elaborated noun phrases, and that it allowed all occurrences of have and be to be attached within the Aux constituent, thereby simplifying the structural index of certain transformations (p. 467) and directly expressing the complementarity of have and be in their various "aspectual" and "nonaspectual" roles. In essence, be gets inserted in those verb phrases which contain a predicate node, but no verb; have is inserted in verb phrases which contain neither predicate nor verb. (Predicates are constituents which may appear as attributes of nouns.) How does all this work in the description of the perfect?

According to Bach's system, have is automatically inserted in
strings of the form \([\text{NP Aux } \#S\#]\), while \textit{be} goes into \([\text{NP Aux } \#S\#_{\text{pred}}]\). The AUX base rule can then be simplified to \textit{Just}: \text{Aux } \rightarrow \text{Tense (Modal)}, where Tense is rewritten as Present or Past. Assuming that the rule of like-subject deletion in embedded sentences applies here as elsewhere, Bach's system can derive these strings (cf. p. 474):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{NP} & \quad \text{Tense} \quad \textit{have} \quad \# \quad \text{Tense} \quad \text{VP} \quad \#
\text{NP} & \quad \text{Tense} \quad \textit{be} \quad \# \quad \text{Tense} \quad \text{VP} \quad \\
\end{align*}
\]

Strings with \textit{be} in the above configuration will develop into sentences containing the present or past progressive, and we will not consider them further here. Of the strings with \textit{have}, Bach says "it seems reasonable to assume that, if the second Tense...is Past, we have the underlying form of the so-called perfect tenses, which will then fall in with their traditional interpretation as 'present-past' and 'past-past'." (ibid.) A necessary condition on the transformation which "assembles" the perfect into its surface form is that time adverbials from the inner sentence must be disallowed in order to present a past adverb from showing up: *\text{I have been in New York last year} from [I Pres # I Past in New York last year #]. Bach does allow adverbs of duration to come from either the inner or the outer sentence; this reflects the ambiguity of \textit{He has been in New York for six months}—which can be interpreted as an answer to either \textit{Has he been in New York for six months now?} or else \textit{Has he ever been in New York for six months?} We will return to this inner/outer adverb contrast a bit later.

Bach's semantic justification of his analysis of the perfects is vague: he pleads that "the connection of perfect tenses to

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Present + Past and Past + Past seems intuitively well-motivated (and is not even very original)" and in the lack of any clear theories about tense is "not much worse from a semantic point of view than others currently available." (p. 477) His generalized semantic formula for the perfects is "NP has the property that S," where S contains Past, and has the same subject noun phrase as the matrix (p. 474).

It seems reasonable to interpret Bach's idea of "having the property of a past event" as a kind of current relevance. We showed in Chapter 2 that current relevance is not a well-defined concept, lacking a consistent definition from case to case. This means that Bach's property is not well-defined either, and cannot serve to distinguish the perfect from the preterit--as Bach would presumably want it to do. But let's give some further scrutiny to the conception of the present perfect as a combined present tense and past tense.

5.4. In its role as an auxiliary, have cannot be said to retain a literal sense of "possession" (cf. I've lost it and the like)—but what meaning does remain? Apparently have as a "pure" auxiliary bears only a "present tense" meaning, that is, it makes explicit reference to the present, and in this contrasts with the "past tense" meaning of the inner sentence. The present perfect thus establishes, as a whole, two points of reference. In like manner, the past perfect would be
defined as Past + Past, that is "past with respect to a time already past with respect to the MOC."

But there is a problem with this arrangement. If we understand "pastness" as a relationship between nonsimultaneous phenomena, such that event A is past with respect to event B if A comes before B in temporal sequence, and if we let B have the value of the MOC, then both the present perfect and the preterit mark pastness: they are nondistinct in terms of referring to events prior to the MOC, as was argued in Chapter 3. Consequently, the preterit has an equal right to be represented as Present + Past, as long as we eschew any special attachment of current relevance to the present marker have. The mere fact that the perfect has a separate present inflectional form, while the preterit does not, should not blind us to the fact that they both link the present moment, the MOC, with a prior time.

Let us consider what would happen if there were no requirement that the embedded tense must always be a Past. In addition to the familiar combinations

\[
\text{Present } + \text{ Past } = \text{ present perfect} \\
\text{Past } + \text{ Past } = \text{ past perfect}
\]

we would have two other possibilities:

\[
\text{Present } + \text{ Present } = ? \\
\text{Past } + \text{ Present } = ?
\]

It is to be remembered that in the Past + Past combination, the second Past stands in relation with the first Past; that is, it marks the past of a past, as explained above. In the combination Past + Present, the interpretation would similarly be, "present of a past". But what does

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this mean? We can characterize "present" as a two-place relation of 
(rough) simultaneity between an event and an orientation point of time 
labeled NOW; this point is normally the actual moment of communication. 
But let us say that NOW can vary with contextual stipulation, so that 
"present" may serve as "simultaneous with a past NOW." Then the formula 
Past + Present means "simultaneous with a time which is past with 
respect to the MOC." This sounds very much like the ID analysis of the 
preterit, as we studied in Chapter 3. But Bach has not taken this route: 
for him, the preterit stands by itself as an "unembedded" tense. This 
being the case, it is hard to see just what the meaning of Past + Present 
would be. Either it is different from Past by itself, in some unex-
plained way, or it is entirely equivalent to Past, the Present component 
being redundant.

The quandary is even more striking with the combination Present + 
Present. The embedding Present means "simultaneous with the MOC"; the 
embedded Present would mean "simultaneous with the time referred to by 
the embedding Present", which is again the MOC. But this means the 
second Present adds nothing beyond the first Present alone; indeed we 
could embed a third Present, and a fourth, and still effect no change of 
meaning.

Bach seems to have gotten entangled by these confusions. He 
discusses (p. 475) the derivations of 

(a) The doors were closed at three.

from underlying

[The doors Past be someone Past close the doors.]

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and of

(b) The doors were closed by the manager at three.

from underlying

[The doors Past be the manager Pres close the doors]

He says that (a) has "an essentially perfect meaning", by which I presume he means a "stative" meaning, like the doors stood closed at three. (This ignores the available active reading, like the doors got closed at three, incidentally.) Yet according to his previously given interpretation of Past + Past, the meaning of (a) ought to be the same as in the doors had (already) been closed at three—in either stative or active senses. Apparently Bach here conceives the two Pasts as signaling "before the MOC" rather than as working in series to represent "before a time which is before the MOC". (It is true that the examples (a) and (b) involve the verb be rather than have, but there is nothing to indicate that tenses work differently between the two.) Thus the two Pasts in the underlying representation of (a) have the same import as a single Past would; we run up against the same redundancy encountered with Present + Present. In the case of (b), we have precisely the combination Past + Present whose meaning we attempted to discover earlier without success.
5.5. Now, let us return to the matter of inner/outer adverbs. Bach noted that "past" adverbs cannot appear with the present perfect, and since the inner sentence is where such adverbs would be generated, he conditions the perfect-forming transformation to apply only to those strings where no adverb in the inner sentence is present (p. 474). Ruling out adverbs compatible with past-tense sentences leaves only those compatible with present-tense sentences (the outer sentence being Present). But this amounts to the claim that the range of adverbs that can appear with the present perfect is the same as that which can appear with the present. This is simply not true; consider:

At the moment he is away.
*At the moment he has been away.
?At the moment he has been away almost a week.

He has been away almost a week.
*He is away almost a week.

There are some adverbs which appear with the present, but not with the present perfect, and some adverbs which appear with the present perfect, but not with the present. (cf. Chapter 4, Section 6.) Hence the outer sentence of Bach's formula is an inadequate source for present-perfect adverbs. It is worth noting that his examples about the door being closed, which are supposed to represent underlying Past + Past (a), and Past + Present (b), must also be constrained to prevent the occurrence of two separate time adverbs in the surface—even though they do not form perfects—to prevent *At three o'clock the doors were closed by the manager at four o'clock (Past + Past); *At three o'clock the doors were in a closed state at present (Past + Present).\(^5\)
Another problem involves Bach's claim that the ambiguity of
he has been in New York for six months exists because the adverbial ex-
pression for six months can come from either the inner (Past) sentence,
or from the outer (Present) sentence underlying the present perfect.
This does not hold up on inspection, however. We can say he was in New
York for six months expressing the total duration of a past event. But
when we say He is in New York for six months, we intend to say that the
period of six months has already started, and will continue into the
future. (There are refinements: the assertion must be made before the
six-month period is reaching its end; it is possible that the being in
New York is a repetitive thing, as in He is in New York for six months
every other year; we are not using this reading in the present discus-
sion.) We would expect that an adverb associated with the Present
component of the perfect would have the same interpretation as when
associated with a simple present-tense sentence, yet it does not: He
has been in New York for six months does not mean that some of the six
months has yet to elapse. The six months is understood to be over;
whether or not it is just now over, or was over in the vague past
(corresponding to the ambiguity Bach brought up) is quite independent
of any inner/outer-adverb contrast. Thus there is no support in the
ambiguity for Bach's Present + Past analysis of the perfect.

This, together with the other considerations we have discussed,
suggests that though the transformational insertion of have may be
justified on other grounds, it does not afford a satisfactory analysis
of the perfect. We will see that other variants of EB theory have
similar problems.
9.6. Huddleston (1969) begins with the observation that temporal relations are marked in surface structures by a variety of indicators: tense inflections, auxiliaries, adverbials, conjunctions, even lexical verb-class (as intend to vs. continue to vs. regret) (p. 786). He attempts to reduce this external diversity by showing how the tense structure of periphrastic syntagms, like John was coming tomorrow, can be compared to that of overtly embedded units, like John intended coming tomorrow. This will eliminate the underlying distinction between auxiliary and full ("lexical") verbs, which "is not entirely clear-cut" anyhow (p. 777). Discussing the two examples just cited, Huddleston says:

The lexical (catenative) status of intend, contrasting with the auxiliary status of be, should not obscure the important similarity between these examples. In both we have a past time component and a future time component; and just as in [John intended coming tomorrow], the former can be associated with intend and the latter with come, so in [John was coming tomorrow] past can be associated with be, future with come. Moreover, just as we would normally regard [John intended...] as involving two tense selections, past and non-past, the fact that [John was...] contains only one full verb should not exclude its analysis in terms of two tense selections. (p. 781)

The two tenses of the progressive may each have their own separate adverbs: Yesterday you were coming tomorrow. Huddleston says that this, "though perhaps a little unusual, is quite intelligible and acceptable." 6 (p. 782) Given the principle of associating each tense with an underlying verb or predicate 7 (p. 783), Huddleston argues that the perfect is most perspicuously described as embodying two tenses, one in the present auxiliary have, and one in the accompanying past participle, which is really an underlying past (p. 784). This
arrangement has several promised advantages: it explicitly relates the
perfect and the preterit in that they both contain Past tenses (the
preterit being nothing but a Past); it reflects the two-part construc-
tion of the perfect; it provides sources for both the present-type
adverbs and the past-type adverbs that accompany the perfect (at present
vs. recently); it provides a representation for the meaning of current
relevance, which Huddleston believes is the locus of semantic difference
between the perfect and the preterit; and it gives certain adverb
ambiguities a deep-structure accounting. Obviously we could dwell upon
each one of these points, but this would not serve the purpose at hand.
Huddleston's procedure of treating periphrastic forms as "double tenses"
brings with it numerous problems, some of which were talked about in the
previous section on Bach's analysis; there are difficulties in generat-
ing just the right set of adverbs for the perfect, again discussed
briefly in the preceding section; a whole prior chapter has been devoted
to demonstrating that current relevance is not the meaning of the
perfect nor the basis of its opposition with the preterit. The claim
of resolving adverb ambiguities is similar to that made by Bach, but
it is worth seeing if Huddleston's version works on its own.

Huddleston examines the example

(a) Every time I've seen them, they've been swimming.

and finds it ambiguous in the following way:

In the interpretation where the swimming has been still
in progress on each occasion, the temporal specifier (an
individuating one) belongs with the past tense... [the
example] may also mean that the swimming has been over
on each occasion but has still had current relevance; in
this interpretation the specifier belongs with the present
tense have. (p. 78k)
These two interpretations might be paraphrased, for clarity, like this:

(b) It has always been the case when I see them that they are swimming.

(c) It has always been the case when I see them that they have previously been swimming.

which correspond, in theory, to Huddleston's two structural diagrams (p. 785):

(b)

(c)
Surprisingly, however, a close scrutiny of these diagrams suggests the following as their nearest explicit paraphrases, instead of (b) and (c) above:

(d) It has been the case that they are swimming every time I've seen them.

(e) It has been the case every time I've seen them that they are swimming.

It is not apparent that there is any actual difference in meaning between (d) and (e). In particular, there is nothing to account for the anteri-

ority of swimming events to seeing events in (e). Thus it turns out that Huddleston's schema of the perfect, as incorporated into the tree diagrams, does not provide for the very difference he intended it to. Palmer (1968), in his discussion of example (a) and the genuine ambigu-

ity between senses (b) and (c) that it possesses, has provided a rationale which I think is essentially correct:

The ambiguity arises from the fact that the perfect may be used to refer either to the overall period of time that we are talking about, or in addition about each repeated period. The overall period of time is clearly shown by Every time I've seen them to be one that began in the past and continues up to the present moment. But the successive periods of time that are to be related to the series of points of time---my seeing them---may either be periods that simply overlap these points of time (non-perfect type), or they may be periods that began before and continued up to the points of time [i.e. "perfect type" reference]. (p. 102)

as:

(b)  \[ \text{see}_1 \quad \text{see}_2 \quad \text{see}_3 \rightarrow \text{MOC (so far)} \]

\[ \quad \text{swim}_1 \quad \text{swim}_2 \quad \text{swim}_3 \quad \]

(c)  \[ \text{see}_1 \quad \text{see}_2 \quad \text{see}_3 \rightarrow \text{MOC (so far)} \]

\[ \quad \text{swim}_1 \quad \text{swim}_2 \quad \text{swim}_3 \quad \]
That is, there are two ways for the perfect to function "legitimately": it may refer exclusively to the overall period of occasions of seeing; or it may be read as "perfect" (anterior) with respect to the individual occasions of seeing. This is easier to see if we have the perfect in opposition to the present tense (cf. Palmer (1968) p. 103):

Every time he comes, he cuts his finger.
Every time he comes, he's cut his finger.
Every time he's come, he's cut his finger.

(thereupon?/already?)

Sometimes the context provides clues as to which interpretation is meant: probably Whenever I've taken up carpentry, I've cut my finger will be read with the cutting following the taking up; while in Whenever I've had to go to the doctor, I've cut my finger, just the opposite order is likely.

5.7. Huddleston applies his analysis to the past perfect, and analogous problems may be recognized. For instance, he says that in the example

In March John had read only two of the books,

we again have the two tense selections: this time both of them are past. The ambiguity in this example, as in the others considered, can be shown by assigning in March to the higher or the lower of the two VP's. In the latter case, the reading is said to have taken place in March; but in the former case we are not told when the reading took
place, only that in March John still had all but two of
the books to read: in March here specifies the 'current'
[relevance]. (pp. 785-86)

Now it is generally recognized that the temporal reference of
the past perfect is to a time which is past with respect to another
time which is itself past with respect to the speaker's present. The
adverbial in March does have the possibility of referring to either of
the past-time references, which may be associated respectively with had
and read. These choices would correspond to the paraphrases

By March John had already read only two of the books.

In the course of March John had engaged in the reading of
only two of the books.

But it is to be noted that we could also describe such a difference as
purely a matter of the ambiguity-potential of the adverb in March,
regardless of whether the pluperfect is deeply represented as a past
embedded in a past. This would solve a problem which Huddleston does
not address, namely that the ambiguity he is dealing with here does not
extend to all past adverbs. One exception we have already given: by
March, which can only be associated with had, according to Huddleston's
analysis. Similarly, at 3:00 last Monday must be prevented from attach-
ing to read, since it is most unlikely that anyone could read two
books quite that fast. It is possible that other adverbs, like in a
short space of time, within a week, must go only with read, as it would
be odd to say ?Within a week, he had earlier read only two of the books.

This also indicates that there must be some means of guaranteeing
compatibility between the adverbs which may attach themselves indepen-
dently to the two pasts; we do not want to allow, for example, *By Mon-
day, he had read on Saturday only two of the books.
We have concentrated on the adverb-ambiguity argument because it offered a new potential argument in favor of EB theory, as detailed by Huddleston. The argument, as it turns out, does both too little and too much: it does not account for the actual ambiguity of (a) as expressed in (b) and (c), and it opens a potential Pandora's box of unwanted adverbs. Hence we return to our earlier skepticism as to the viability of the EB theory of the perfect.

5.8. There is one argument for an EB treatment of the perfect which seems solid. However, it applies to a variety of perfect we have not said much of anything about, namely nontensed, infinitival perfects; furthermore it applies only to certain infinitival perfects, those embedded beneath an "epistemic" matrix predicate. We will look at the reasoning briefly here, because it feeds into a more ambitious theory which we will consider a bit later.

Consider that while we cannot say *He has left last Tuesday, we can say He is understood to have left last Tuesday or He may have left last Tuesday. It seems that in these latter two examples, an "original" preterit has somehow been transformed into an uninflected perfect. The fact that the adverb, which in independent sentences is compatible with the preterit only, remains with the nontensed perfects, suggests that unlike the perfects we have been studying previously, the perfects here
are nothing but substitutes for preterits, with no difference in meaning. (Of course, "original" perfects may embed as infinitives, too: He has left by now \(\implies\) He is supposed to have left by now; He had left by then \(\implies\) He was said to have left by then. There is a general "merger" into the perfect infinitive.) Hofmann (1966) seized upon these various "tense replacements" (including the reduction of the present tense to a plain infinitive, as He likes yogurt \(\implies\) He is thought to like yogurt) and devised a system of transformational rules to mechanically generate the correct replacements.\(^8\) The central rule of past-tense-replacement took the form:

\[
X \quad \text{Ed (Perf)} \quad Y \implies 1 \quad \text{Perf} \quad \emptyset \quad 4
\]

where Ed = past tense, and there is a condition that this transformation operate only on embedded strings (pp. 10-11). Note that underlying "original" Perf is deleted and the underlying preterit gets changed into the surface Perf.\(^9\)

We have exemplified the kinds of expressions which take reduced embeddings: he is said (to), he is supposed (to). These are thought to be themselves transformed from it is said (that he...), etc. That is, we begin with something like it is believed that he left yesterday, or rather we begin with a string which may reach the surface in this form, and we "raise the subject" to produce he is believed... whereupon we must also perform tense-replacement to get he is believed to have left yesterday. Other matrix expressions which seem to behave similarly are it is certain (that), it is possible (that), and by analogy, we may even include the modals, like this: it may be (that),

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it must be (that). Of course, the transformed embeddings following
the modals don’t appear with a surface marker to, but this is a
relatively minor difference: he may have left yesterday is created
by the same basic process which works with the other epistemic ("truth-
qualifying") expressions.

A further extension that Hofmann made was based on the idea
that if it may be (that), it may be true (that), it may be the
case (that) all qualify as epistemic predicates taking embedded sen-
tential subjects, then why not include it is (that), it isn’t (that),
it is true/the case (that), as found in e.g. It isn’t that he wouldn’t
have come, rather that he would have been late. 10 Of course, these
predicates differ from the earlier-mentioned epistemics in that there
is no infinitivalization process going on. Hofmann was intrigued,
however, by the fact that a sentence like Lions have been mammals
for as long as I can remember seems to be understood as if the adver-
bial did not apply to the apparent proposition about lions' being
mammals, but rather to the speaker’s awareness of or belief in the
validity of that proposition: "it has been true for me as long as
I can remember, that lions are mammals"--I have known this truth for
a long time. 11 Unfortunately, the parallel between it may be true
and it is/has been true is not supported by syntactic phenomena
such as tense-replacement, and we risk various paradoxes and re-
dundancies in the free generation of it is/ was/ has been true (etc)
as epistemics: what would it mean to say It has been true that he
left? What would differentiate He left from It is true that he left?
Or from *It is true that it is true that it was true that he left?*

Hofmann's treatment did make a good case for some (infinitival) perfects being derived from preterits, and offered a much more tentative suggestion that some nonembedded perfects might have internal structure not obvious on the surface. These ideas converged with those of an emerging "generative semantic" school of transformational grammar which was eager to get behind the surface intricacies and idiosyncracies of words, morphemes, syntags, and discover the underlying general principles and forms, which might have little resemblance to the familiar categories and arrangements of linguistic theory—even Chomskian theory. The general tenor of the generative-semanticist approach to the auxiliary can be indicated by taking an example from Ross (1967).

I choose one which contains *have* in a complex auxiliary; unlike Hofmann, Ross does not treat this as a derived constituent (he says very little about the semantic function of *have*). His emphasis is more like that of Huddleston: the elements previously classified simply as parts of the AUX are elevated to the status of full verbs in underlying structure, differentiated only by the feature +AUX in their lexical entries. The string *Tom might have been singing* is analyzed \(^{12}\) as containing a set of embeddings:
(cf. p. 7) Ross has not incorporated tense in the tree, but elsewhere he gives a tree in which the highest verb do is featurally specified as +PRES. This does not reveal much about the inner nature of tense, but represents an analytical precedent which, together with Hofmann's, prepares the way for McCawley's (1971) explanation of the perfect, which will be the subject of an extended discussion below.
5.9. We saw earlier how Hofmann handled tense-reduction in embeddings by the formula

\[ X \text{ Ed (Perf)} Y \implies 1 \text{ Perf} \circ 4 \]

Hofmann also observed that the present tense in embeddings is rendered by a simple infinitive under those conditions where the past forms all collapse to have; e.g. it is understood that he knows the answer is paired with a subject-raised version he is understood to know the answer with present tense deleted from know (Hofmann, p. 5). McCawley combines the present-tense deletion, and the past-tense replacement, conditioning them by the presence of to as a marker of subordination:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Pres} & \implies \emptyset \\
\text{Past} & \implies \text{have}
\end{align*}
\]

in env. to ______

But this requires a separate rule to delete "original" have:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{have}_{\text{AUX}} & \implies \emptyset \\
\text{in env. have} & \implies ______
\end{align*}
\]

to prevent

\[(\text{it is understood [he Past have known the answer]})\]

from turning out in the subject-raised version as

\[\text{*he is understood to have have known the answer with Past } \implies \text{have}. \text{ (Cf. p. 101.)}\]

Actually, as McCawley notes, the environments of subordination are not very well represented by the infinitival marker to, since this must be generated only to be deleted in many cases, e.g. there is no

\[\text{*he may to have known (from [it may be [he knew]])}.\]

Instead, McCawley turns to the process of subject-raising and observes that this, in effect, "swipes" the subject of the embedded sentence, so that there is no subject left for subject-verb agreement to apply to (cf. he knows).
This lack of agreement can be used as the condition for the tense-deletion rule.

But since we have a process which produces perfects in subject-less embeddings, why not make all embedded perfects derivational products? This would eliminate the need to get rid of original have's separately. McCawley reasons:

since all occurrences of the auxiliary have [as embedded] are in environments in which subject-verb agreement would not be applicable, the generalized version of tense replacement...would permit one to take all underlying have's as underlying past tenses. (p. 101)

Thus, just as

\[ [X \text{ Past } \text{have}_{\text{AUX}}] \implies [X \text{ have } \text{have}_{\text{AUX}}] \]
\[ \implies [X \text{ have } \emptyset] \]

\( (X \neq \text{subj}) \) by the separate rules of past-replacement and have\textsubscript{AUX} deletion, so can

\[ [X \text{ Past } \text{Past}] \implies [X \text{ have have}] \]
\[ \implies [X \text{ have } \emptyset] \]

by a double application of past-replacement (as conditioned by non-agreement), plus a rule deleting any have following another have in the same string.

An important difference between Ross and McCawley should be noted at this point: it is that while to Ross, tense was only a feature attached to verbs, for McCawley tense is itself an "abstract" underlying verb. The difference can be seen in their respective analyses of John had been smoking pot. In Ross's terms this is

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whereas in McCawley it is

\[
[[[[\text{John smoke pot}]_{S_3} \ \text{be}]_{S_2} \ \text{Past}]_{S_1} \ \text{Past}]_{S_0}
\]

The significance of this for the present discussion is that the set
of embedding environments, to which tense-replacement applies, is
greatly expanded; in fact, it now includes not only the epistemic
predicates we talked about earlier, but any Pres or Past at the
topmost level, \( S_0 \). (This is similar to Hofmann's suggestion that there
are epistemic predicates like \textit{it is true} (that...), \textit{it wasn't the case}
(that...) hidden in some, possibly all, sentences.) \textit{John}, in the example
above, will be subject-raised and the \( S_0 \)-level Past will undergo agree-
ment with it (vacuously in this case), which removes that Past from the
threat of conversion into \textit{have}, but this protection is not available to
the \( S_1 \)-level Past:

\[
[\text{John} \ \text{Past} \ [\text{Past} \ [\text{be} \ [\text{smoke} \ \text{pot}]])] \\
[\text{agree}]
\]

\[
\Rightarrow [\text{John} \ \text{ed} \ [\text{have} \ [\text{be} \ [\text{smoke} \ \text{pot}]])]
\]

\[
\Rightarrow [\text{John} \ \text{had} \ \text{be-en smok-ing pot}]
\]

Thus the device of taking tense as an underlying, embedding verb allows
tense-replacement to operate with great generality, and we arrive at
a full-fledged EB theory of the perfect.
5.10. Since there is no *a priori* limit set on the number of sentence embeddings that can be generated in a given derivation, it is possible that there might be a whole stack of Pasts, all of which get eliminated (by *have*-deletion), all except the topmost two (the second is "saved" by tense-attraction, i.e. merger with the first, which has undergone agreement:

\[
[\text{Past} \ \text{Past} \ \text{Past} \ \text{Past}] \Rightarrow [\text{Past} \ \text{have} \ \text{have} \ \text{have}]
\Rightarrow [\text{had} \ \text{have} \ \text{have}] \Rightarrow [\text{had} \ \emptyset \ \emptyset]
\]

McCawley sets out to show that this is not a handicap; that it is, in fact, a descriptive advantage. According to the "past-embedded-in-present" analysis of the present perfect, the past perfect should be analyzed as a past embedded in a past; this would explain why

a past perfect allows two time adverbs: at a more underlying level of structure, there is only one time adverb per clause, and the past perfect would arise from an embedded structure, whose main clause and embedded clause could each supply one time adverb. (p. 103)

The separate adverbs appear in sentences like

When John married Sue, he had met Cynthia five years before.

But McCawley observes that

this gives reason for setting up two sources for a past perfect, which is far short of the infinitely many sources that I suggested. What about a third source, the past of a past perfect? I know of no good examples of a past perfect with three time adverbs, but there are examples of past perfects with two time adverbs and an implicit reference to a third point in past time, as in a discourse containing sentence [a],

\[[a] \text{When John had married Sue, he had known Cynthia for five years. (ibid.)}\]

He says this

is possible only if the discourse has already mentioned some past time which is taken as the "reference point" for
John married Sue; [a] could then be analyzed as the past (the unmentioned reference point) of the past (John's marrying Sue) of a present perfect (John has known Cynthia for five years). Thus, if a "reference point" is taken to be a tense, with or without time adverb, whose subject is an embedded sentence corresponding to the event or state that is being described relative to that reference point, there is some reason for allowing the potentially limitless freedom of combination of underlying tenses which my revision of Ross's analysis appears to demand, except that the occasion would hardly ever arise for one to use so many subsidiary "reference points" as to require tenses piled more than three deep. (ibid.)

Presumably McCawley would consider a sentence like the following to exhibit multiple levels of pastness-embedding:

After he had left his apartment and had made sure no one was following him, he had hurried on to the bank, had withdrawn all his funds, and, before anyone had noticed, had then skipped town.

Now, the question is, do we want to posit that the entire sequence of events is laid out in the underlying structure with each event expressed by a verb phrase containing precisely varied numbers of had's?

after he had had had had had had left
and had had had had made sure
he had had had had hurried on
had had withdrawn
and before anyone had noticed
had skipped

There exist various means of marking out the order of sequenced events; there are conjunctions (before, as, after), there are adverbs (later, not long before), there are different embedding-verb classes (intend to vs. regret)—cf. Huddleston, above—and, of course there is word order. These devices are usually sufficient so that the past perfect can even be dispensed with entirely:

After he left his apartment and made sure no one was following him, he hurried on to the bank, withdrew all his funds, and, before anyone noticed, skipped town.

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Are we then to say that each of these preterits represents a series of tense-embeddings, just one step more "collapsed" than the version with the past perfect? It would seem not. For one thing, it is difficult to imagine that the speaker, as he starts out to relate some series of events, knows just how many degrees of pastness he is going to have to back up to, so as to construct the right number of embeddings. It seems much more reasonable to simply say that languages don't ordinarily require or even allow verbal markings which specifically mark a reference-point "depth" of greater than two. Apparently McCawley's claim that the multiple-embedding possibilities of his analysis reflect genuine underlying tense ambiguities is not really the advantage it seemed at first. Failing as an advantage, it once again becomes a problem, and throws McCawley's analysis into doubt.

9.11. Turning to the meaning of the present perfect, McCawley recognizes that the simplest interpretation of "past in the present" is inadequate:

The present perfect obviously is not merely the present of a past in the same sense that the past perfect can be the past of a past: the obvious parallel to using the past perfect, which at a designated reference point in the past would have been reported in the past tense, ought to be using the present perfect for something which at a designated reference point in the present would be reported in the past; but since the present is the only point in the present, that characterization would amount to the absurdity
That is, if the function of the "present" embedding is merely to provide a reference point for a past event, then (as we have seen elsewhere) the preterit is not differentiated: for the preterit, too, is past with respect to the present moment. McCawley suggests that the past-in-present configuration is actually a derived structure:

I am not going to argue that the present perfect is ultimately the present of a past but rather that through deletions it acquires a derived constituent structure having a present as its highest verb and past as its next highest verb, that is, what I had suggested as a deep structure in the revision of Ross's analysis proposed above is really just an intermediate stage in the derivation. (p. 104)

Thus he attempts to get beyond the semantic nondistinctness of preterit and perfect found with Huddleston, Bach, and others we have discussed, by suggesting that at a deeper level, the perfect is more than just "the present of a past." What "extra" meaning does McCawley see in the perfect?

McCawley distinguishes (p. 104) four uses of the perfect:

(a) to indicate that a state of affairs prevailed throughout some interval stretching from the past into the present (Universal):

I've known Max since 1960.

(b) to indicate the existence of past events (Existential):

I have read Principia Mathematica five times.

(c) to indicate that the direct effect of a past event still continues (Stative):

I can't come to your party tonight--I've caught the flu.

(d) to report hot news (Hot News):

Malcolm X has just been assassinated.
He asserts that these are all distinct senses, since in

Max has been fired, and so has Fred.

both events are understood to be of the same type, i.e. either

Max and Fred have been fired on occasion (Existential)
or,
both Max and Fred are currently out of work as a result of being fired (Stative)
or,
the firings of Max and Fred are both pieces of hot news (Hot News)

The fact that both conjuncts are understood in the same sense, rather than one in one sense and the other in another, is supposed to show that the readings of Max has been fired by itself, are finite in number---that it is ambiguous, rather than vague. Of course the claim that the perfect is ambiguous rather than vague depends on the reliability of the conjunction-reading-sameness as a test of ambiguity.16 This has been debated, but for our present purposes, it is sufficient to point out that apparently any one of a set of "different" perfect types we care to make up will apply equally to both conjuncts for the simple reason that, lacking other information, the hearer will understand the readings to be the same. But given such individuating information, it is possible for the identity of readings to be defeated:

Max has been fired—at least one time that I know of—and now Fred has been fired, too.

This would seem to be a mixture of existential perfect and hot news perfect. Or perhaps the second conjunct is really an existential perfect, though it seems to have the form of a hot news perfect.17 In any case, McCawley's claim that the perfect is ambiguous rather than vague, and that moreover it is ambiguous among just the four senses he lists, is not convincing.
If McCawley had been able to show that the perfect was ambiguous, it would have lent some justification to treating the different varieties independently of each other—just as he does in fact have much to say about his existential and universal perfects, but hardly anything to say about his hot news and stative perfects. Since the evidence that these senses are really distinct is weak, it becomes more important that the EB theory, to be convincing, should treat all senses in terms of the same underlying structure.

McCawley does note the possibility that the hot news perfect is but a variety of the existential perfect:

> it is clear that the status of news of the thing being reported is essential to the acceptability of the sentence ...one might say that the hot news present perfect is an existential present perfect in which the speaker bases the range of the quantifier not on his own presuppositions as to when the event in question might happen but on his estimate of his addressee's presuppositions... (p. 109)

McCawley argues that if the hearer is assumed not to know that an event has happened, the period of its possibility still exists for the hearer, and thus even rather "old" events can count as hot news. The period is always extended forwards so as to include the time that it would take for news of [the event's] happening to get around. (ibid.)

i.e., to get to the addressee. This estimation process on the part of the speaker is very much pragmatically-defined, and makes the acceptability of examples dependent entirely on context. It is hard to see how the existential perfect and the hot news perfect can be structurally distinct—which they must be, since McCawley says his analysis will explain the existential perfect but not the hot news perfect.

And then there is the stative perfect, more often called
"resultative". How do they possibly fit in with McCawley's EB analysis?

The stative present perfects would presumably correspond to a semantic representation in which a description of the event is embedded in a context like "the direct result of ___ continues", which would again involve a source for a past tense embedded in a source for a present tense, so that again a deletion could give rise to the desired present + past configuration. However, in this case I am at a total loss to find a detailed analysis which would correctly explain what effect the sentence refers to... (pp. 108-09)

Since we have argued at length in Chapter 2 that there is no effective way to represent the meaning of stative (resultative) perfects in structural terms, we are scarcely in a position to relieve McCawley's uncertainty about the adequacy of his present + past configuration. And the point remains, that McCawley's EB theory loses explanatory force if it cannot explain all the important varieties of perfect he chooses to distinguish.

5.12. It will be remembered from Chapter 2 that the existential perfect presupposes that the event it expresses is a "currently possible" one. The sentence *Einstein has visited Princeton was odd19 not because there is a specific presupposition that the surface subject must refer to someone who is alive (as Chomsky had it), but because the subject's being alive

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is merely inferrable from the presupposition ["present possibility"] of the sentence plus factual knowledge such as the knowledge that one must be alive to visit Princeton... (p. 106)

Even the requirement of present possibility turns out to be too specific, as we argued. What is the invariant contribution of the perfect is simply the inclusion of the past event in the "extended now" (XNOW). McCawley was not entirely convinced of his own restriction to presently possible events; he says "I can get at least marginally" the example Many people have climbed Everest; for example, Marco Polo has climbed it, in which

The present perfect here is repeated in a clause which provides an example of the kind of event which a preceding existential present perfect asserts to have occurred. I do not understand the details of the derivation of a sentence such as [this] nor can I characterize the range of cases in which this phenomenon can occur. (p. 108)

Compare Chomsky's similar puzzlement, Chapter 2, Section 12.

Interestingly, in his most explicit description of the underlying semantic structure of the perfect as an embedded past, McCawley seems to be verging on something like an XN theory. We will here take a deep breath and plunge into his exposition:

The universal and existential present perfects appear both to involve a quantifier that ranges over an interval stretching from the past into the present and differ as regards whether that quantifier is universal or existential. I have argued elsewhere...that a quantifier joins two propositional functions, one giving the "range" of the variable, and one giving the property that is being asserted of things in that range. I propose that these two propositional functions provide the sources of the two tenses that I wish these present perfects to be derived from: the range provides the present tense, since it must be an interval containing the present, and the function being asserted provides the past tense, since it is being asserted of events or times that are in the past. I assume that the tense morpheme corresponding to the range would be put in

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the clause corresponding to the quantifier. At some later point in the derivation, these quantifiers are deleted, leaving as traces only their tenses and such words as ever, already, and sometimes, and a time adverb describing the range, for example, since Tuesday, during the last five years. (p. 105)

Let us see if we can make out what McCawley is saying. The notion of the "range" of the quantifier which is involved with the universal and existential perfects apparently has to do with time envisioned as a continuous sequence of discreet moments or times. The function expressing the proposition, that is, expressing the existence or occurrence of an event, is associated or "bound" either to a particular time, or to specified/unspecified times, or to all times, falling within the specified range or over-all time span. The universal perfect applies the proposition to all times within the range; the existential perfect applies the proposition to some, but not all, times within the range. Since the time-range "past-to-present" includes the present, the range must be characterized as part of present time, i.e. present tense. The event-proposition itself, however, is not directly characterized as to its relationship with the MOC, but since "it is being asserted of events or times that are in the past" it acquires a past-identification indirectly.

Now it seems to me that McCawley's basic idea is correct: the "range" of times corresponds to what we have previously called the "reference period" of the perfect; the event proposition indicates the actual (past) event times. But McCawley is not playing it strictly kosher in rendering these two functions as the sources of present and past, respectively. Time adverbs "describing the range", such
as since Tuesday, up till now, are not simply present adverbs; they
do not go with ordinary present tenses in English, but only with the
perfect. Hence, if the perfect contains a higher present tense, it
will have to be recognized as something different from all other
present-tenses.\(^{20}\) As for the "event proposition" being the source of
the past component, the "property" being asserted is really double:
that event,\(_{x}\) occurs at time \(t\) and that time \(t\) is past. When McCawley
says that the property "is being asserted of events or times [? ] that
are in the past" he is in effect slipping in a third proposition:
event times are before MOC. This specification is not incidental; if
event times are not specified as prior to the MOC, there is no dis-

tinction from present or future tenses (we might say this year I'm going
to travel with the same "present" range as in this year I've traveled
a lot or this year I'm traveling a lot).

Not to be forgotten is the fact that the preterit may equally
well be said to have a range: an interval which stops somewhere short
of the MOC. If the perfect has an overall period associated with it--
a present period--a preterit has an overall period associated with it.
For certainly the particular event-times of past events are but rarely
localized exactly: it is sufficient to place past events in a "ball-
park" of some past-time (THEN-time) range in using the preterit.
(Cf. Chapter 3.) Further, since the relational function "past", i.e.
BEFORE \(x,y\) where \(x\) = event and \(y\) = MOC generates a range by itself,
we may view the perfect and the preterit as determined by the specific-
cation of two temporal ranges: one, the t-range, which identifies
the actual event-range; and another, let us call it the T-range, which

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identifies the overall range of reference or inclusion. We may represent these graphically as follows:

**present perfect**

```
   MOC
   /___
   |    |
   |    |
   |    |  past t-range
   |    |
   |__   |
   \   /  event
   | \\  |
   |  X  N  O  W/T-range
   |  ___  |
   |    \\ |
   |     \\|
   |       |
   |       |  THEN
   |       |
   |       |  X  N  O  W/T-range
   |       |
   |       |  THEN/T-range
```

**preterit**

```
   MOC
   /___
   |    |
   |    |
   |    |  past t-range
   |    |
   |__   |
   \   /  event
   | \\  |
   |  X  N  O  W
   |  ___  |
   |    \\ |
   |     \\|
   |       |
   |       |  THEN/T-range
```

Assigning the preterit both a t-range and a T-range may seem to represent a redundancy, but it is not actually so. The t-range by itself says only that the event is prior to the MOC and does not narrow the time down any further. With the perfect, it is of course impossible for the event times to fill out the whole of the T-range because the latter is not limited to past time; with the preterit, the T-range specifies that we are not talking about all of the past-prior-to-MOC, but only about THEN-past. Adverbs will pertain to the T-range, not to the t-range;\(^{21}\) this generalizes a principle which McCawley uses to explain the exclusion of adverbs like *yesterday* from the perfect:

since the time adverb of the scope of the quantifier is a bound variable which the quantifier binds, *I have written a letter yesterday* would be excluded for exactly the same reason as *I talked to someone the butcher:* in both cases

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a constant and a variable would be filling the same position. (p. 106)

In I wrote a letter yesterday, yesterday is not competing with an XNOW T-range (expressed, or implicit as in McCawley's example), and so can stand as the T-range of the preterit.

Since we do not equate "range" with "tense" as McCawley does, we get around a problem which arises with the EB format, stemming from the fact that the latter "allowed in principle for presents and pasts to be embedded in one another to one's heart's content" (p. 113). This problem is that

In the case where the range asserting the existence of past events does not contain the present, the "range" does not contain its own tense: a past tense is used rather than a past perfect...This suggests that the rule creating the outer tense of present perfect applies only in present contexts. This in turn implies that present tense differs from past tense in more ways than it has generally been held to: it marks an absolute rather than a relative time relation. (p. 113)

Notice that here McCawley acknowledges that the preterit does have its own range (corresponding to our T-range)--in spite of the fact that its range does not appear in the surface structure as a separate tense-element. To save the EB description, McCawley must claim that the present and preterit tenses are not of comparable nature after all. This difference is emphasized by the fact that embedded pasts were much easier to come by than were examples of embedded presents; indeed, the only examples of embedded presents to be found above are the presents of embedded present perfects. (p. 113)

presumably such as found in he may have come as a paraphrase of it may be that he has come. McCawley considers even these cases "spurious", since he is committed to the view that "there are no embedded

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presents" (ibid.)—though he does not tell us where embedded original present perfects come from. Some constraint on free embedding of present is also necessary to prevent structures such as present-embedded-in-past, which seems to be indistinguishable in interpretation from the past by itself. We noted this problem with Bach, and indirectly, with Hofmann; indeed it is a difficulty with all EB theories, and makes the embedding generalization less impressive. It is bought at the cost of de-generalizing tense as a class of entities in the grammar, and in the lack of independent justification, this seems a dubious exchange.

5.13. Some of these problems in getting the past-embedded-in-present schema to provide the correct behavior of the perfect were recognized by Darden (1968).22 He observed that the embedded past cannot be a "normal" past if we are to generate a proper semantic model of the perfect. (Darden works from an opposition based on indefiniteness, with some CR thrown in; we will not worry about this here, since all that is important is the fact that the perfect has a meaning which is different from the sum of its supposed parts.) The basic opposition, as Darden sees it, is that

in the simple past the action is localized at a past time, while in the perfect the action is treated as prior to but somehow relevant in the present...All of the meanings
of the English perfect include a reference to only one specific time, the present (or the past in the case of the past perfect). The reference to the time of the action is limited to one of priorness. (p. 15)

This sort of contrast was also promoted by Reichenbach and Bull. If the perfect really is an embedding, there is a loss of "localizing" power somewhere along the way:

If we add the qualification that a past, when embedded, loses the ability to refer to a specific time, we can claim that the meaning of the perfect is derivable from the fact that it is an embedded past. (ibid.)

If embedded pasts lose their ability to refer to a specific time, this explains why embeddings are only two deep (the depth of the pluperfect):

If one assumes that an embedded past can only mean priorness to a point specified by the sentence in which it is embedded, then the semantic result is the elimination of all but one perfect. Let us assume a sentence in which past₁ is embedded in past₂, which is embedded in present. The meaning of past₁, when embedded, is "prior to the point in time referred to by past₂." However past₂, because it itself is embedded loses (or does not have) the ability to specify a point in time, and simply means "prior to the present." The end result is that all we know of the action predicated by past₁ is that it is prior to the present. (p. 16)

Thus an "embedded past" is just not the same critter as the surface past,23 and this must be borne in mind when attempting to justify the EB interpretation of the perfect:

We can now conclude that an interpretation of perfects as embedded pasts is possible, provided that one allows for the fact that embedded pasts differ semantically from surface pasts. This provision is of course crucial. In everything said above, "embedded past" could be rewritten "perfect" with no loss of validity; that is, there could be underlying perfects. Most generative grammarians would prefer this to having transformations which change meaning. One could of course have contextual semantic readings for "past", depending on whether or not it was embedded. However,
this type of complementary distribution is relevant only in going from form to meaning. (p. 16)

And it is just such a procedure that McCawley rejects: the underlying structure of the sentence is supposed to represent the semantics directly, and different readings are to have different underlying forms. An underlying past which is not like other (surface) pasts cannot be said to be a "past" in the first place.

It is probable that McCawley would want past tenses to change into have whenever embedded, for the sake of generality. Yet as Darden points out, not all cases of what seem to be embedded pasts wind up as perfects; for example, neither the gerundive phrase in I am upset at your coming in so late last night nor the infinitive phrase in It was foolish to come at six o'clock contains have (your having come in, to have come) in spite of the clearly past adverbs which suggest embedded past tenses. In fact, all of the problems attendant to converting pasts into perfects via mechanical rule will reappear here, such as the requirement that past tenses occurring with adverbs like yesterday may embed only if the embedding structure is itself in turn embedded. That is, we cannot stop at *He has left yesterday, but must go on to He seems to have left yesterday—unless, of course, these are taken to be the result of different processes.

Thus the very evidence on which McCawley based the argument that "have" comes from an embedded past can be used to show that this is not the case in the perfect. This, in my opinion, indicates that McCawley's analysis is wrong. (p. 17)

Another problem Darden points out has to do with McCawley's (1968) view that tense relates sentences temporally: each tense provides
the reference point for the next tense down, and the reference for the highest tense is provided by a performative sentence present at the start of every derivation. (This is not very different from Allen's position, cf. Chapter 3) The preterit is then a past embedded under a (necessarily present) performative, while the present perfect is a past embedded under a present which in turn is embedded in a (present) performative—roughly I DECLARE TO YOU THAT [S]. Darden objects:

This makes for a rather strange interpretation of the perfect... the verb "present" [immediately under the performative] seems to indicate that the time of action of the verb "declare" is the same as the time of action of the verb "past" [immediately below "present"], while the verb "past" indicates that the time of action of the verb of the main sentence... is prior to the time of action of the verb "present". This is meaningless to me... (p. 20)

Alternatively, if the "present" contributes only the meaning that the "past" is prior to "present" rather than some other reference, it is redundant with the present declarative which dominates "present": the past is "prior to a point which is simultaneous with the time of utterance", which is equivalent to "prior to the time of utterance". But this latter is supposedly the schema of the preterit (past embedded immediately under the declarative), thus collapsing the semantic distinction between perfect and preterit. This is just a restatement of the fault we have discussed several times of maintaining that the preterit does not have a present reference (that is, a present "root"), while the present perfect does.

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5.14. The past perfect is defined by McCawley as a Past embedded in a Past, and as we have seen at several junctures, the embedded Past is not merely past with respect to the MOC; it is past with respect to that past time referred to by the embedding tense. For this reason, McCawley designates Past as a "relative" tense, the Present being "absolute" since it always is located temporally by the MOC (p. 110). (This is reminiscent of Allen's distinction between hierarchically related tenses and those that have a constant point of orientation throughout a sequence of clauses, cf. Chapter 3, Section 7.) The higher past supplies the root of the lower past, and in this performs as a sort of antecedent, as with pronouns:

the [past] tense morpheme does not just express the time relationship between the clause it is in, and the next higher clause—it also refers to the time of the clause that it is in, and indeed, refers to it in a way that is rather like the way in which personal pronouns refer to what they stand for. For example, a past tense normally requires an antecedent... (ibid.)

We discussed a very similar view of Allen's earlier, coming to the conclusion that while some preterits may function anaphorically like pronouns, not all do. And in fact, the "pronominal" nature of the preterit comes into conflict, as Darden pointed out, with the idea that the perfect has a Past (which would, by itself, reach the surface as a preterit) contained within it. That is to say, when a Past is embedded under a Present other than the performative, it loses its ability to "localize" event-times, in Darden's phrasing. The claim that the preterit is a definite past—which is what the "pronominal" description amounts to—is actually at odds with the claim that the perfect embeds a Past. Even though we have rejected the theory that the preterit marks
definite past time, it remains true that there is some difference between a "straight" Past, and one which is partners with a nonper-
formative Present.

McCawley mentions one argument in favor of the pronominal con-
cep tion of the preterit which we have not encountered before; he says that

treating tenses as some kind of pronoun allows one to avoid having to set up two different and's, one symmetric and the other asymmetric (= and then). (p. 111)

What McCawley means is that each of a sequence of Pasts provides the antecedent of a subsequent Past, "each past tense referring to a time shortly after that which the preceding past tense referred to" (ibid.). Apparently McCawley has interpreted pronominal antecedence (pronouns referring to the same entity) as temporal antecedence (one time preceding the next)! But even without this confusion, it is not clear that we need worry about getting rid of asymmetrical and: it is not a particular lexical item that tells us to interpret events as a sequence, but our capacity to figure out the most likely arrangement of events. We may compare McCawley's example which is supposed to illustrate the sequentiality imposed by asymmetrical and's (all but the last of which are suppressed in surface structure),

The Lone Ranger broke\textsubscript{1} the window with the barrel of his gun, took\textsubscript{2} aim, and pulled\textsubscript{3} the trigger.

with the following nonsequential version:

The Lone Ranger stood\textsubscript{1} guard by the door, tried\textsubscript{1} to figure out who his adversary was\textsubscript{1}, and nervously fingered\textsubscript{1} his trigger.

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in which our "picture" of the situation does not demand that some things happen before others. Diver (1963), a staunch proponent of ID theory (cf. Chapter 3), commented

...the \textit{ed} form itself gives no information about the chronological relationships within the sequence. Of two \textit{-ed} forms in succession, the second may indicate an event that is (1) after, (2) simultaneous with, or (3) before the event indicated by the first form. Thus:

(1) He walked in and sat down. (2) He smoked and read for half an hour. (3) Slocum chose to follow the route that Magellan took. (p. 167)

Thus we see that pragmatics sticks its nose in the door once again.24

If there is any sense in which an EB theory implies ID theory, as McCawley seems to believe, then we feel EB theory is weakened, both for the specific reasons discussed in the immediately preceding sections, and the objections expressed in Chapter 3.

5.15 We began this chapter with a disclaimer that we could not undertake a discussion of all the various arguments and counterarguments which have been produced, over the last decade or so, in the course of a highly technical and theoretical debate about the "real" structure of the auxiliary component of the verb phrase. The debate centered on whether it is more "explanatory" to think of the members of the auxiliary as true verbs in a relatively abstract underlying structure, or to think of them as no more than the erratic and enigmatic pieces of structure

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they appear to be on the surface. In either case, there are peculiarities of syntactic behavior to explain, and a plausible model of semantic workings to construct. How far then does it help to liken these phenomena to the behavior of "ordinary" verbs?

The only part of this question that we have taken on is the issue of the "abstract" analysis of the perfect, which we have called the "embedded past" theory. Though arrived at by different paths, EB theory is a feature common to several generative approaches to the English tense system. The supportive arguments come largely from attempts to make the perfect fit in better with the "simple" tenses, by showing that it is made up of simple tenses—a present with an embedded past. Bach (1967) found it desirable on independent grounds to generate have by transformational insertion into the Present + Past configuration; however, as we observed, there are problems in constraining the generation of compound-tense configurations, and certain important matters of adverb cooccurrences were not accounted for adequately. Huddleston (1964) wanted to make the auxiliary more transparent by analogy with "lexical" verb embeddings; problems similar to those of Bach are encountered. Another line of thought began with Hoåsmann’s (1966) evaluation of certain infinitival perfects as embedded preterits, and expanded through Ross’s (1967) "generative semantic"-style treatment of the auxiliary as a hierarchy of underlying verbs, to McCawley’s (1971) proposal, which identifies the Present component with the "range" of the perfect, in a way not unlike XN theory, but not identically. McCawley, as well as Bach and Huddleston, attempts to associate the underlying embedded past structure of the perfect with a current relevance
meaning, which leads into all the criticisms made of CR theory in
Chapter 2. He also makes some arguments in the indefinite-past vein,
though these are subject to the criticisms of Chapter 3, and in addition,
necessitates that the embedded Past "delocalize" its reference in an ad-
hoc manner. A number of uncertainties and paradoxes arise in McCawley
(as well as Huddleston and Bach) from confusing "tense" as a temporal
relation function with "tense" as a temporal reference point.

In sum, we find that EB theory can be interpreted—with some
difficulty—as a version of XN theory, but the mechanics of producing
the right adverbs are problematic, the semantic interpretation of
"present of a past" is uncertain, and the character of the tense-
embedding is different in various respects from other kinds of embedding.
EB theory is therefore considered to introduce more problems than it
solves, and regardless of other programmatic merits, we do not consider
it an advance in the analysis of the perfect.
FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER 5

1. This is the form in which the AUX expansion is most often quoted, though it does not exactly reproduce either Chomsky (1957, p. 39) or Chomsky (1965, p. 107), but combines the two.

2. Chomsky did make some comments on the meaning of the perfect, as we discussed in Chapter 2. But nothing else was said about the place of the perfect in the grammar.

3. Ross (1967) and Peterson (1974) describe various advantages of treating the auxiliaries like embedded verbs. Two important ones are the elimination of the need to refer, in transformations, to the set consisting of modals, have as main verb or as auxiliary, and be as main verb or auxiliary, which does not appear to represent a "natural" constituent; and the provision for pronominalization of sub-parts of the AUX, e.g.

    John might have been singing, and so might Bill have been.
    so might Bill have.
    so might Bill.

The Chomskian AUX did not present a constituency that would allow these alternatives. (See also Edmondson and Plank (1976).)

The success of the embedded-verb analysis, generally identified with the "generative semantic" branch of transformational grammar, is not a subject we can meaningfully debate within the limits of the present work. The reader is referred to critiques in Pfaff (1972), Sobin (1974), and Steele (1973). Steele summarizes the situation:

    the modal-as-modal analysis, with its insistence on the fact of grammaticalization, renders capturing the generalizations about modals impossible. The modal-as-main-verb analysis, with its insistence on the similarities between modals and main verbs, gets tangled in the fact that modals apparently do not derive like regular main verbs with subject or object complements. (p. 199)

4. Gallagher (1970) objects that the transformational simplifications are minor, and can be accounted for in other ways (p. 42). Darden (1968) observes that inserting have directly into the auxiliary obliterates the syntactic differences between the have of the perfect and other have's, inviting such outputs as *Does he have gone? (p. 18).

5. Bach (1967) noted the need for this constraint in connection with other examples, like *he slept for three hours for four hours, which are not excluded by Chomsky's base rules (p. 472).

6. This actually has the ring of an "indirect quote" (cf. Banfield (1973)). Other tenses are not as amenable to double adverbs; Huddleston

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cites (p. 787) yesterday he left tomorrow, which he considers rare but not ungrammatical. Palmer (1968, p. 89) says they had to leave early as they started work the next day is ambiguous, having one reading equivalent to "...as they were going to start work..." Perhaps this reading is made easier by the fact that the started work part may be interpreted as an indirect, embedded quote, as if it came from ...as they said they started work... = ...they said we start work..." Visser (1966), in all his massive collection of examples of tense usage, provides only four examples of this sort (p. 749). Sobin (1974) allows the preterit to have a "future sense", but mostly "in the context of story telling and narrative writing" (p. 25), as instances of "free indirect speech": (Jack knew that) Jill left the next day.

There is a related ambiguity in Huddleston's examples: does tomorrow refer to the speaker's tomorrow, that is, to the day after the occasion of speaking? Or to the tomorrow of the person being spoken about, the day after his (past) occasion of speaking (which may be the speaker's today)?

7. Since Huddleston is committed to associating each adverb with a separate tense, he is forced to view now he leaves tomorrow as "containing two deep structure verbs even though there is only one in surface structure" (p. 787). But now he is dealing strictly in analysis by analogy. And note that the meaning of "tense" has shifted: it is no longer a relationship between times, but a time which is linked to another time in a tense relationship. Now he leaves tomorrow, linking future to present, is no more than a single two-place function—unless we want to identify some extra hidden present-tense predicate, such as Now (he says) he leaves tomorrow; cf. footnote 6. Similarly, I cannot see the sense of saying that he will leave tomorrow is to be analyzed as "future in the present rather than simple future" (p. 789): what can the difference be?

8. The replacements by the infinitival perfect have been observed by others before—cf. Jespersen (1931, p. 88).

There are various problems in the "automatic" replacement of preterit and present tenses in the embeddings. Sobin (1974) noted that Jack was leaving the next day embeds without the expected perfect: Jill believed Jack to be leaving the next day (p. 129). Also, the present sentence Maureen leaves tomorrow cannot readily embed at all: *Jack believes Maureen to leave tomorrow. The futurate sense of the preterit Jack left the next day (= Jack was to leave...) cannot embed either: *Jill believed Jack to have left/to leave the next day. Emonds (1975) observed that some undoubted preterits do not become perfect infinitives: John was in Africa last month, but John was rumored to be in Africa last month, depending apparently on whether the past times are understood to be simultaneous or not. Similar phenomena were also remarked upon by Jespersen, p. 247, by Abbott (1973, pp. 58–59), and by Darden (1968, p. 17). These facts constitute indirect evidence that the EB analysis is not as solid as it seemed for embedded infinitival perfects.

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9. He rejects the apparently simple rule $X (Ed) (Perf) \Rightarrow 1 \emptyset Perf$ 4 because this requires a separate constraint to say that either Ed or Perf must be present for the transformation to apply—otherwise Perf would be introduced in any string. His other proposal, namely $X Ed (Perf) Y \Rightarrow 1 \emptyset Perf$, though "slightly unintuitive", is argued to provide a better solution in that it suggests why there are two forms of tag question, viz. I shouldn't have come, should I/should I have? If the tag-formation process deletes everything after tense, then the alternation should I/should I have (or so must she, so must she have, etc.) could come from there being two tenses underlying, either of which could fill the transformational bill. (cf. pp. 19-20) Thus the surface have needs to be identified as a Tense marker, and this can be done simply by having it replace Ed, rather than Perf (which may or may not be there anyway, cf. ibid., p. 11). This reasoning depends on the particular formulation of the tag (Hofmann's term is "short answer") rule, which seems rather less important than the other issues we are considering as a motivation for the deep analysis of the perfect. See section on McCawley for another version of tense-replacement.

10. Possibly a closer paraphrase would be The problem/objection is not that... which destroys the simplicity of Hofmann's epistemic predicate.

11. Lees (1961) remarks

the putative sentence *Horses have been mammals is not parallel to a bona fide sentence such as Those horses have been groomed. In so far as utterances of the form in question are used, they are best construed as elliptical variants of longer sentences of the form: It has always been true (understood, recognized, assumed, asserted, and so on) that horses are mammals. In other words, the "perfectivity" of the verb phrase is not construed with the copula itself but rather with some other verb in an underlying sentence. Notice that the utterance in question could only be used in a form like Horses have (always) been mammals as long as I have been studying zoology or the like. (p. 160)

Ota (1963) objects to the use of a loose paraphrase as a basis for structural arguments:

The difficulty with Lees' argument...is that there is no limit to this kind of paraphrasing. If Horses have been mammals should best be construed as an elliptic variant... then why not regard Those horses have been groomed as an elliptic variant... (p. 51)

In other words, the appeal to ellipsis is suspect if it is used only for the difficult cases, so as to "save" them. This is pretty much the same argument we have in mind against Hofmann's use of epistemics.
12. There is actually an error in Ross's diagram: the V-node under the highest VP is missing. I have made the correction.

13. Cf. the diagrams in McCawley, pp. 98 & 99; there is an error on p. 99—the innermost "past" node should be labeled "be" instead.

McCawley does not join Ross in wanting to make all constituents of Aux underlying verbs. In fact, McCawley says his rules support a basic formulation of Aux as Tns + (Mod) + (Prog) because tense (Tns) elsewhere than in top places gets deleted or transformed into have; modals (Mod) cannot appear in infinitival (tenseless) form, nor as participles (i.e. following Prog); and the progressive must be last "because of the constraint that the topmost verb of its complement must be nonstative" (p. 102) which also applies to the perfect auxiliary: *he is having known. This is in striking contrast to Ross, who used similar arguments to demolish the generation of Aux in the base.

14. Yet if, as we have argued, a past-in-the-present is not distinct from a preterit, the intermediate stage represents an implied semantic merger.

15. McCawley's terms correspond to more traditional ones as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>McCawley's</th>
<th>Universal Perfect</th>
<th>Existential Perfect</th>
<th>Stative Perfect</th>
<th>Hot News Perfect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>=</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous Perfect</td>
<td>Experience Perfect</td>
<td>Current Relevance Perfect</td>
<td>Recent-Past Perfect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


17. McCawley presents later an example with just this mixture of readings: Have you heard the news? Frank has been sleeping with Julie. (p. 110) McCawley sees in this "no new problems":

"The structure underlying an existential present perfect would be embedded in the structure underlying a hot news perfect, and the resulting present-past-present-past combination would become present-have by tense replacement and have-deletion."

But this rather elaborate programmatic structure—whether or not it works—goes against McCawley's claim that only same-sense perfects can cooccur; and since this latter notion was the original test for ambiguity, as opposed to vagueness of readings, the identification of "only four" perfect types seems to be vitiates.

18. Dillon (1973) rejects the separation of existential and universal perfects because "the 'existential' and 'universal' qualities of the clause are predictable from the features of the verb" (p. 278). This is in the spirit of our comments in Chapter 4, Section 9.
19. The example is not starred in McCawley, but the text makes it clear that he intends it to be.

20. As Darden (1968) remarks, examples like *I am reading three hours already are "easily understandable, but should be marked with a six-pointed star" (p. 15). McCawley considers this a relatively incidental quirk of English, since other languages allow the present in analogous expressions, as German Ich lese schon drei Stunden. Yet the equivalence is not complete; Sørensen (1968, p. 77) observes that one can say I have lived here for five years, but I don't live here any more in English, but in German,*Ich wohne hier seit fünf Jahren, aber ich wohne hier nicht mehr is a contradiction. Moreover, the present is not the only possible tense in such cases in German. Schipporeit (1970) shows contrasts, as between the following situations:

Nina is standing in front of a fur shop looking at the fur coats. She points to one of them saying: So einen Pelzmantel wünsche ich mir schon lange. [= I've been wanting a fur coat like that for a long time (and still want one)].

... On her birthday, Nina receives a beautiful fur coat from her husband. She happily exclaims: So einen Pelzmantel habe ich mir schon lange gewünscht! [= I've been wanting a fur coat like this for a long time (but now I wish no more)!] (p. 108)

So we still have to account for the nonuse of the simple present tense.

21. This is similar to Reichenbach's idea (Chapter 3, Section 6) that adverbs apply only to the "reference point", not the "event point"; though of course, we are not just talking about points.

22. There is no mistake in the publication dates; McCawley's theory was being discussed by 1967, though it was not published until 1971.

23. Actually it appears that Darden goes too far. According to his description, there would be no difference between the present perfect and the past perfect. Yet the past perfect means something like "prior to then"; the present perfect, "prior to now". Assuming the perfect represents an embedded past, a more accurate statement would be that a past embedded in a present cannot "localize" time (the present perfect); but a present-embedded past which in turn has a past embedded in it can (must?) localize time; and the past which the present-embedded past embeds can either be localized or not. It remains true, however, that not all embedded pasts behave alike, and this was Darden's original point.

24. Ruhl (1974) enumerates the difficulties of attempting to account "at one point in the grammar" for the relationships involved:

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It is possible, of course, to define deep structures so that the added temporal, preconditional, and causal elements are initially present and then deleted. To the same effect, lexical items like 'and' and 'after' can be appropriately polysemic to handle these cases...Nevertheless, this approach has several complications it is best to avoid. First, creating lexical polysemy is in principle, it would seem, a path to be taken only at last resort, especially when parallel polysemy is involved: a generalization seems to be lost. Second, not only lexical items, but also zero connections between sentences would have to be also polysemic, since juxtaposition creates the same relationships as 'and' and 'after'. Third, if the connective material was not incorporated into 'and' and other items, we would need to find some rationale other than [recoverability] for the surprising loss of temporal and causitive information. Such a loss could be explained by a cohering principle: that people will in fact read into the sentence the necessary connections. But since this principle is a sufficient explanation, it is pointless to put such connections in the deep structure to begin with. Finally, this approach does not have any obvious means for differentiating the degree of coherence each sentence has; if I am correct in claiming that "reading in" is determined conditionally and subjectively, then there seems to be no obvious way to make such distinctions at a deep structure level. (pp. 225-26)
Chapter 6
THE PAST AND FUTURE OF THE ENGLISH PERFECT

6.1. In our discussion so far, we have avoided considering the preterit/perfect opposition from a historical point of view. This was in part because we wanted to avoid prejudicing our description of the opposition as it now stands with claims about what it once was. The perfect, in the earliest stages of its evolution, seems to have expressed present states of affairs, much in contrast with its modern-day meaning, such as we have argued it to be in preceding chapters. Quite a number of writers have insisted (Jespersen, Joos, Dietrich, etc.) that the modern present perfect asserts information about the present, only implying a prior event that brought about the present situation; our view is just the reverse (cf. especially Chapter 2, Section 11). We will reinforce this view with a brief consideration of Gallagher's (1969) attempt to derive modern perfects from the "old" perfect by a simple change of word order.

Yet if the perfect did undergo a meaning change, how and when did this occur? Scholars who have examined the extant monuments of literature find that the perfect did not come on the scene full-blown but developed gradually: first "the construction was extended to all transitive verbs and then to verbs with objects in genitive or dative; finally it was extended to the intransitive verbs" (Fridén (1948) p. 41). This growth was not merely statistical; if one reflects for a moment,
it becomes apparent that there must have also been semantic change.¹
For if, as commonly maintained, the original sense of the perfect was
like that of the modern structure represented by he has the problem
all cleared up, that is, "he has the problem in a condition of resolu-
tion", how could we get an intransitive verb in the same sense—*he has
X retired (not in the causitive sense, "he gets X retired")? Or, for
that matter, what about all the transitive expressions which do not
readily take on a purely stative meaning, like *he's got the room
(all) left, as compared to he's left the room?

In the present chapter, we are going to see if we can identify
the pattern of historical change. A central problem in this effort is
that of determining when a given case follows the modern pattern, and
when not. It is necessary to pay delicate attention to adverbs, syn-
tactic parallelisms, and general context—a difficult but not, we think,
impossible undertaking. In the midst of this unraveling process,
however, we confront a problem: there are many cases of seemingly random
use of the preterit and perfect, and while this would not be entirely
unexpected in a period of change, the possibility arises that the
perfect/preterit opposition has collapsed somewhere along the way, and
the modern opposition is not the continuation from the original "stative"
perfect/preterit pairing, but has grown up independently. This view is
represented by Visser (1973 & 1966), and will be studied in detail. The
major champion we have selected for the view that the modern opposition
is the outcome of a continuous development is Bauer (1970b), who argues
that there are certain clear differences in the "restrictions" asso-
ciated with the Chaucerian preterit and perfect, as witness different
frequencies of cooccurrence with verb types, adverbs, and other contextual items. While some of Bauer's arguments do not pan out entirely, they suffice to suggest that Visser's "anarchic" hypothesis needs greater evidentiary support of its own.

In the latter part of the chapter we will turn to the question of where the English perfect is headed. This of course rests on an evaluation of present-day usages which do not conform to the pattern we have depicted in earlier chapters of the present work. The crucial question here is that of consistency in nonconformity, which in turn requires a careful account of what counts as an "exception". Vanneck (1958) and Defromont (1973) comment on the apparently increasing use of the preterit in place of the perfect by American speakers. We shall attempt to see what the actual import of such observations is.

6.2. Back in our chapter on current relevance theories of the perfect (Chapter 2), we gave some attention to the fact that if, as claimed by CR proponents, the function of the present perfect is to assert something about the present state of the world, rather than relate a prior (causative) event, then we might reasonably expect there to be a virtual equivalence between he has written the letter, in the modern perfect form, and he has the letter written, as an answer to Does he have the letter written yet? The latter syntagm, with adjectival participle
postposed as a complement to the object, reflects the "old" form of the perfect as it is first encountered in English. (Early examples, of course, show number and object-case-agreement on the inflected adjective. Word order was nondistinctive.) On the assumption that the two different word orders are scarcely different in meaning, the opportunity would arise, in a transformational theory of grammar, to derive the "new" form from the "old" form by a simple transformation which moves the participle; thus expressing the semantic equivalence, saving on rules otherwise needed to generate them separately, and recapitulating phylogeny in ontogeny. This opportunity has been taken up by Gallagher (1969), who concentrates on identifying structural similarities between the two in support of their essential sameness.\(^2\) (A study of her arguments here is instructive also in that it suggests ways of classifying disputed historical examples of the perfect on the basis of concrete elements of syntactic context. These means of "detection" will be useful later.)

Gallagher maintains (pp. 53-54) that all the below express present state:

- John has already thoroughly disposed of that.
- John has that disposed of.
- That is already thoroughly disposed of.
- John has completed his dissertation.
- John has his dissertation completed.
- John's dissertation is completed.

These sets share the properties of being incompatible with agentive by-phrases or with "definite" time adverbs. Both the old and the new perfects have a deep structure which consists of a matrix sentence containing the stative verb have (derived in turn from a dative...
predicate of the type \text{nbe to }X, \text{ e.g. is to John} \) and an embedded sentence expressing a "stative passive" predicate (such as dissertation is (all) done). Since both matrix and constituent sentence are stative, the agentive by-phrase can attach to neither, hence the perfect both in old and new forms is "ambiguous" (sic!) with respect to agent (pp. 54-55).

The old form, as in \text{John has that job finished}, does not tell us if the surface subject was the immediate agent or the indirect agent who caused someone else to finish the job, Gallagher says. But we must object here that the "mediate" agency interpretation is not stative. \text{John has the job finished by Alvin (whenever possible) is a present (possibly generic or habitual) causative expression--complete with by-phrase.} On the other hand, \text{John has the job all finished} is a present stative (Gallagher's "static passive"). The surface structure type \text{John has X finished} is ambiguous because it neutralizes two completely different underlying structures with two different verbs, one active and one stative.

Gallagher proceeds to try and show that the newer form of the perfect shows the same "agency ambiguity" as the older: \text{John has disposed of that} may be read as "John has had someone dispose of that"; similarly, we may understand in the case of \text{John has completed his encyclopedia} that "John may have employed assistants" (p. 55). But is this a real ambiguity?

According to Lakoff's (1970a) test for ambiguity versus vagueness,\(^3\) the latter example is vague, not ambiguous: we can say \text{John has completed his encyclopedia and so has Harry} without implying that either
both had help or neither had help. Even if we do not accept the lack of limitation to two-way (rather than four-way) ambiguity as a legitimate indicator of vagueness, it is to be noted that the preterit version of the sentence John completed his encyclopedia is no clearer about the use of assistants than the perfect version, so this property is not a thing that is peculiar to the perfects. Moreover, the uncertainty about assistants is not the same kind of uncertainty that the structure John has X completed shows; after all, in the causative reading (Gallagher's "kinetic passive"), we can add a by-phrase, as shown earlier, but we cannot do so with the "assistant agent" reading of the new perfect: *John has finished the job by his friends. It was wrong of Gallagher to assume in the first place that incompatibility with a by-phrase entails ambiguity of agency. An example like John has the job finished carefully is structurally causative, and requires the agency to be indirect (we can add: ...by his friends, but not *...on his own; contrast this with the otherwise similar John gets the job finished carefully, which can add either). An example like John has the job all finished is structurally stative, and structurally excludes an agent phrase (making the term "static passive" misleading); it corresponds to other assertions of present state such as John has it ready. New and old forms are not really alike in agency readings.

The structure represented by John has finished X is unspecified as to whether other agents were involved; as to whether it is stative, as Gallagher claims, we need to look at her argument about adverb cooccurrences. The sentence *what toast is burnt at noon today is supposed to be bad (assuming is burnt is only stative, i.e. adjectival;
Gallagher does not use the form *burned* because of the appearance of the "definite" adverb *at noon today* (p. 56). Likewise bad is *John has thrown that out at noon today* (I don't know why Gallagher doesn't use the example *John has burnt the toast at noon today*), because, the claim is, both matrix and embedded sentences are stative, so the "definite" adverb can attach to neither sentence. The sentence *That toast was burnt at noon* seems to have the adverb (Gallagher says "tense", but I think she means "adverb") coming "from outside the surface structure sentence" (p. 54). This gives a reading "equivalent to saying that that someone discovered the toast to be burnt at noon, or to saying that someone can testify as to the state of the toast as of noon" (ibid.). The adverb is in fact punctual, not just definite (whatever that may mean), and it is quite true that combining a punctual adverb with a stative predicate blocks the sentence—unless a way around the impasse, via an interpretation, can be arrived at. Such an interpretation might involve the idea that the toast was burnt at a certain specific time *at least*, and presumably other sequential times too. Hence the implication "when I checked on the toast", etc., though possibly the connection might be read as incohesive: "suddenly the toast was (became) burnt".⁴ We are here rendering interpretive solutions rather than structural ones, in order to avoid proposing the transformational deletion of an actual deep structure constituent "when I discovered it" or the like, since this would be a meaning-changing operation. Also, there is no good reason for preferring one possible underlying structure over another at this stage.⁵

We can see that the fact that the present perfect in its "new"
form does not normally go with "definite" adverbials does not by itself show that the new present perfect expresses a (present) state. According to Gallagher's reasoning (and according to her transformation that turns the old perfect into the new perfect), we should be able to take *John has the toast all burnt—or rather its underlying structure—and turn it into *John has all burnt the toast. Obviously, this won't work. Or, to go the other direction, we should be able to relate

\textit{John has burned the toast recently} to *John has the toast burned recently. \textit{Recently} is clearly not a present adverb, nor limited to statives, yet it goes with the perfect (and with the preterit). And most importantly, \textit{John has burned the toast} does not necessarily require that the toast is presently burned—not because toast can become unburned, but because the toast may have gone down the garbage disposal, may no longer exist. This is what is wrong with Gallagher's further claim that "possessive have" and "perfective have" share the property of requiring that "the grammatical subject, if animate, be alive, if inanimate, in existence". We will not repeat the arguments on this topic already given in Chapter 2.

Most important of all: if old and new perfects are equivalent in meaning, why is there a striking difference in acceptability between

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{My cousin has played that sonata.}
  \item \textit{??My cousin has that sonata played.}
\end{itemize}

In Chapter 4, Section 11, we claimed that the awkwardness of such examples stems from the difficulty we encounter at interpreting a "presently played state": playing a sonata does not normally leave it in a recognizably "played" condition, but that is the meaning required
by... has that sonata played. 6 This will be one of the keys in deciding whether or not a given example in older English is likely to be a "real" perfect, analogous to the modern perfect. The other key is the context, especially the syntactic context of adverbs, determiners, etc., that surround each example. We discussed a number of such contextual factors in Chapter 4, Section 9. It will be seen below that these factors worked in much the same way hundreds of years ago.

It should be kept in mind that I do not deny the historical correctness of the new perfect growing out of the old—indeed I intend to defend this theory against Visser. I only reject the claim, explicit in Gallagher and implicit in many others, that the old perfect is structurally and semantically undifferentiated from the new perfect.

We will now see what we can learn of the history of the perfect.

6.3. Let's begin with a capsule history of the English perfect, as given by Visser (1973):

Originally have in colligation with a past participle was a notional verb denoting possession, while the past participle was a complement or attribute to the object and had a good deal of adjective force, tests its being (in the beginning) inflected in agreement with the gender and number of the object: I have my work done = I possess or have my work in a done or finished condition. From this state as a result antecedent action was inferred, so that the colligation came to be used to denote completed action... In Present-Day English the word-order in independent syntactical units usually clearly indicates whether state or action is meant,
so that I have my work done implies the former, and I have done my work the latter. For a long time after the Old English period, however, this difference in word-order was without this discriminative force..., and the interpretation of constructions with mid-position of the object exclusively depended on situation and/or context... (p. 2189)

This explains why we cannot simply use word order to distinguish the "old" perfect from the "new" perfect; the modern distinction in word order (v. Gallagher) was not there originally; we will have to use other means of distinguishing between the old stative sense and the new "perfect" one.

But it was not only a word-order change. Visser believes that since the previous stative sense of the perfect was lost, or no longer required, the original basis for an opposition with the preterit was also lost, and the modern opposition would have had to come from a completely different source:

One should not lose sight of the fact that in the course of time the character of this opposition has undergone a fundamental change: In Old English the time-sphere of e.g. he haefð begin fet gescome ["he has both feet shod"] is decidedly the present, expressing as it does what 'now', 'at the present moment' is a fact, whereas in the [hypothetical] Old English statement he gesceode begin his fet ["he shod both his feet"] the time-sphere is clearly the past. Consequently the opposition preterite/perfect was at the time of a temporal character. When in later English the sentence with a perfect had adopted modern word-order, it referred to something happening or occurring in the past. And since nowadays the preterite equally refers to something happening or occurring in the past, the opposition preterite/perfect has ceased to be a temporal one, and the term "tense" is apparently a misnomer. (ibid., p. 2192)

Though Visser does not settle on any of the particular theories about the meaning of the perfect that we have discussed, he is convinced that it is no longer a tense opposition as it was in the beginning. Given
this view, it is natural to expect that the forms would have undergone a period of great confusion, during the changeover. And this is what Visser believes to be the case. That is, he finds a good number of apparent exceptions to the pattern of modern usage:

In Old and Middle English the use of the preterite or of the have + past participle pattern was not subject to the same rules as in Present Day English: [the perfect] being often employed when nowadays the preterite is in order, and the preterite where today the [perfect] is required...it has been pointed out how freely these forms were interchanged in poetry for the sake of rime or metre... (1966, p. 749)

His examples include:

When pe persone hāp herd pis, sore he worp adrad, ywis. [When the person has heard this, sorely he became afraid, indeed.]

His bowe he bente, and sette ther-inne a flo [arrow]
And in his ire his wyf thanne hath he slayn.

(Both from Chaucer, c1386)

Sir Bleoberis ouerthrowe hym, and sore hath woundyd him.

(Mallory, Morte d'Arthur, 1470-85)

And he comments that "prose passages in which the two forms alternate are by no means rare" (p. 750).

Instances of "cross-match" in the other direction, where modern English would favor or virtually require the perfect are (ibid, pp. 753-54):

Nu hit is vmbe secue ʒere þat þu were here. [Now it is about seven years that you were here.] c1200

Til now ze axiden [asked] not ony thing in my name. 1380

Had we any erpe-quakes late e [in] þis lond? c1400

I ete [ate] not an nedyll Thys moneth and more. 1460

I havhe lettyrs fromy [from my] lorde wryte [written] in Napwles byt I red them not ʒeyt [yet]. c1480
You spoke not with her since? (Shakesp., Lear) 1605

Considerably earlier examples are also in the record, as we might expect from the simple fact that the preterit for a long time dominated the field, but we will stick close to the period roughly between late Middle English and early Modern English, for the most part. The examples we have chosen in this and other sections are intended to provide clear contextual bases for identifying verbal usage. In the Chaucer examples above of perfect-for-modern-preterit usage, the key is parallelism between the clauses, (...he bente, and sette...and... thanne hath he sleyn.), or the presence of certain adverbial elements (when he persone haf herd...) or both. Generally, it is most useful if we can find adverbs which are not likely to be ambiguous between the THEN-sense and the KNOW-sense (cf. Chapter 4), as in

schewe to him fullich [fully]...al pat euers pat 
pu hast doon pat yer
(Sermon, c1369-1400)

Many Greke pat day fatally haf lorn his life
(Lydgate, 1820)

Visser is aware of the importance of such adverbs in determining non-contemporary usage:

The presence in the utterance of adjuncts indicating past time (erdisse [ere this], in my youth, to-forn this tyme, whylom, pat yer, etc.) did not prevent the perfect from being used... (p. 750)

Unlike Koziol, Erades and the others (Chapter 4, Section 4) who deal with modern instances where THEN adverbs appear with the perfect as anomalies, Visser sees them as "survivals of a usage that formerly... occurred quite normally" (1973, p. 2197).

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Yet as we discovered in previous discussions, it is not always clear that an adverb may not have a sense compatible with one or the other tense. Visser takes it as self-evident that "past" adverbs must properly go with the preterit, in modern usage, but this is not a simple rule. Among his examples of "anomalous" perfects is

he byeth wull here as he hath don in tymes past

(Malden, c 1480)

but in fact, we can perfectly well say ...as he has done in times past/previously/heretofore/formerly. These adverbs, in modern usage at least, may refer to time within the extended now; we shall have to be especially careful not to find confusion in what is a normal ambiguity. Bauer also has trouble with this, though he is more cautious than Visser.

6.4. But before we undertake to discriminate "preterit senses" of perfect forms, and "perfect senses" of preterit forms, there is the prior issue of distinguishing between those have-structures that were stative, and those which functioned as a genuine past tense (whether or not distinct from the preterit). Visser's argument that the perfect changed completely and randomly from a stative expression to a past tense, with an intervening period of nonspecialization, requires that the perfect not have had a past-tense function much before the Middle English period of confusion. Our task is then to examine available
examples (of which Visser provides a large store) and see if we can find cases where the predicates do not readily lend themselves to stative interpretations. The clues will be the appearance of by-phrases of agentivity, nonstative adverbials, verbal parallelism, and whatever other indicators we can use with reasonable certainty. Some of the examples will contain the auxiliary be rather than have, especially those with intransitive verbs, but clearly do not make sense as statives. This is an important, though nonstructural, clue: the identification of predicates which don't "work" as statives, as demonstrated earlier. For further illustration, we can compare, in modern English,

Then when we have that all worked out...

(Then when that is all worked out...)

Christopher had her corner.

(Christopher had her in the corner.)

Now what has me bothered is this.

(Now what bothers me is this.)

(varied slightly from Visser (1973) p. 2191) with the following:

??When you have the record good and played...

(??When the record is good and played...)

??I've got the door well knocked.

(??The door is well knocked.)

??He keeps me telephoned all the time.

(??Here I am, telephoned again.)

These latter examples show the difficulty of using the stative perfect with just any proposition; many (perhaps most) events in our lives do not leave behind them identifiable, literal states of some permanence and durability. This all turns on our knowledge and belief about the
way the world works, of course. In particular cases the ordinary assumption about the transitory character of an act and its sequels may be supplanted; for example, if I know that a certain person is frightened by receiving telephone calls long distance, I might, just to be nasty, call him long distance and utter *Now that I've got you good and telephoned...* But ordinarily, it is nonsense to speak of "being in a telephoned state": there is no normal connection between a prior act of being telephoned and a present condition—other than in the weak sense of "being after getting telephoned", which would apply equally to the preterit.

6.5. Gathering all the armory of clues described above together, we turn our eye to the data. It is possible to argue that an example like the following may be interpreted equally well as present state or prior event:

(...Naebbe ge na godne timan areodone; min dohtor is nu
[Nor have ye (a) good time decided-on; my daughter is now
swiðe bisy ymbe hyre leornunga.
very busy about her studying.] later
10th c.)

It is less easy to find the state interpretation in:

Sceogað eowre fett...sorne naebbe we begen fett gescote,9
["Shoe your feet"...then have we both feet shod.] c890

poor had kyng Alisaunder yment...be cee haue ypassed
[though had king Alexander intended...the sea to have passed

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again and to war upon Frenchmen]  
(Visser (1973) p. 2065)

And it is impossible, because of adverbs and tense-parallelism in:

I am your dogther Custance...That whylum [some time ago]
ye han sent un-to Surrye.

...be wheche sekenesse [sickness] bay [they] haue cagh
cl415
all this yere before.

To hell your Cyte [City] sall dyscend als oher fyfe
[another five] hath done be fore.

(Visser (1966) pp. 750-51)

At this point, the fact that modern English would probably use the
preterit in at least one of these cases (whylum ye han sent) is immater-
ial. We only want it to be clear that the perfect could function
generally as a past tense. Such past-tense usage is perhaps most
striking with intransitive verbs, since their normal perfect auxiliary
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was be, which conflicts with the modern English sensibility, limiting
as it does the role of be to structures other than the perfect.as it
does the role of be to structures other than the perfect.

The perfect periphrasis with intransitive predicates quite
understandably was built with the auxiliary be rather than have in early
Germanic and Romance because there was no object to be "had" in he is
fallen and the like. But already in Old English, the forms with have
appear (Visser (1973) pp. 2042; 2191. See also Mustanoja (1960)
pp. 449-502.) It has been suggested that this reflected a semantic
development away from the stative meaning: in all the North and West
Germanic languages

A tendency can be noticed, especially in the earlier
linguistic periods, to use, in varying degrees, have
when action is particularly stressed, be when the emphasis
is on state. (Johannisson (1958) p. 106)

This opposition later gave way to a virtually exclusive—and hence non-
meaningful—use of one or the other auxiliary with verbs like come, go,
fal, grow, etc. in the perfect of modern Germanic languages. English
has but vestiges of the use of be as auxiliary of the perfect; where
it is used, the modern speaker automatically expects a stative predicate
and is nonplussed if there are indicators working against a stative
interpretation. Visser is aware of how this relates to the various con-
textual clues we have been talking about: in our era it forces a
choice of have or be:

in Present-day English the patterns he is gone and he had
[sic; should be has] gone are both fully established
usage, with a difference in meaning much more stringent
than ever before obtained: is gone, being void of any
idea of activity, expresses the absence at a given moment
of a person or thing, so that gone is equivalent to away,
not here, etc. In he has gone, however, the speaker is
aware of at least some of the activities concomitant with
going away...

It stands to reason that when there are adverbial
adjuncts like out of the room, to the station, or quasi
direct objects such as two miles, a little space, the
non-static connotation is apparent and have preferred.

It is also clear that is is the required form when the
reference is to the absence of an inanimate being (my
watch, the key, the letter, is gone), it being impossible
in this case to think of any action having been performed.
This, however, does not seem to be a hard and fast rule...
[e.g. ...and when I went back to look for it, it had
gone] (1973, p. 2061)

I think he fails to see the peculiar British sense of had gone meaning
"had disappeared", but this is not of great consequence. More impor-
tant is that Visser does not seem to be aware that the considerations
influencing the modern choice of have or be also apply to cases dating
from before the rigorous split between the two auxiliaries; that is,
while the choice of auxiliary may not have been determined in this way before the modern era, the interpretation of each case would have been much the same as if the choice had been made in a regular manner. We can examine other examples in this light. Rummaging in Visser, we find:

\[ \text{The desert are} \begin{align*} &\text{he} \ [\text{thowards}] \text{burg} [\text{through}], \\ &\text{Til } \text{hat he comen} [\text{came}] \text{ to munt hor.} \end{align*} \]

\[ \text{c1250; p. 2070} \]

(NB the "historical perfect"; see below)

\[ \text{wundres hat misliche [variously]...hauen } \]

\[ \text{bifallen} \]

\[ \text{c1240; p. 2052} \]

\[ \text{Alisaundre to-fore is ryde} \]

\[ \text{c1300; p. 2067} \]

\[ \text{Alle...hatter been iridenen [ridden]} \]

\[ \text{c1250; p. 2067} \]

\[ \text{Sum ar slyddin our [over] the wall} \]

\[ \text{1375; p. 2070} \]

\[ \text{Heo [she] tolden be kinges al heore [her] cas [story], hov [how] heo hadde i-sped [ppl. of 'speed'] } \]

\[ \text{c1300; p. 2070} \]

\[ \text{Afterward when they were stepped fro the bar} \]

\[ \text{1533; p. 2071} \]

\[ \text{And after, when she was departed hense} \]

\[ \text{1510; p. 2076} \]

\[ \text{Your eldest daughters have fordone themselves,} \]

\[ \text{And desperately are dead [=} \text{have died}^{12} \] \]

\[ \text{1605; p. 2078} \]

\[ \text{she must be dead [have died] many years before} \]

\[ \text{1722; p. 2078} \]

Apparently stative cases are present in the following:

\[ \text{Certaine knyghtes...beynge sore brused, lamed and well steppte [NB!] into yeares.} \]

\[ \text{1562; p. 2071} \]

\[ \text{he caught up his hat, went out the door, and was gone.} \]

\[ \text{1894; p. 2063} \]

\[ \text{(if was gone was perfect, it would represent had gone, which would not fit with the sense of the passage)} \]

\[ \text{Cumulatively, we have pretty good indication that at least some instances of periphrases with have and be were serving as genuine past tenses quite early on. (There are cases where modern English would use the preterit,} \]

\[ \text{241} \]
but again, for the present phase of the argument, this does not matter.) Hence, Visser's claim that the perfect went through a period of non-differentiation from the preterit, as a result of shifting over from one meaning (present state) to a "completely different" one (past tense) seems dubious. There was no wholesale shift; the perfect was used as a past tense, though somewhat sporadically, in a small number of verbs (transitives first), and gradually spread out from there.

6.6. Now we come to the second phase of the debate. We have seen that when the perfect eventually came to be a true competitor of the preterit in the role of a past tense in Middle English, there were many apparent variations from the modern usage pattern, and even some instances of what seems random distribution. Visser interprets this situation to mean that there was no difference at all between the two, that they were semantically equivalent. (This would correspond to the "chaotic" interphase between old and new systems.) Actually, the very fact that both forms survived into modern English suggests that they could not have undergone complete semantic merger; what typically happens in such cases (as with the French preterit/perfect opposition), is that one or the other form wins out (the winner regularly being the perfect), taking over both past-tense meanings. But we will assume no a priori objection here.
The question of opposition has been brought up intermittently by various authors; the most direct confrontation I have found is contained in a study by Bauer (1970b) of the use of tenses in Chaucer and Gower (later fourteenth century). We will examine Bauer's arguments and evidence in favor of the theory that Middle English, as represented by the two authors, did distinguish preterit and perfect, and did so in a way that is closely parallel to the modern distinction. (Bauer is basically, though not consistently, an XN theorist; cf. 1970a, p. 191, 1970b, p. 74.) Exceptions are of four main sorts: the archaic use of the preterit (as it was before the perfect gained full force), as used in the English Bible; disturbances imposed by foreign influence (French or Latin); poetic license to fit rhyme and meter; and certain variances from modern English in the classification of adverbs. The total picture is, according to Bauer, quite consistent with the present-day situation; consequently, we may presume a continuity in the opposition as it has developed over the last thousand years or so.

The technique Bauer employs in developing his case is not unlike our system of looking for contextual clues that indicate which of two possible readings is the likely one. He examines the linguistic properties of different "contextual types", which include telic or atelic verbs (see Chapter 4, Section 9), markers of iteration, negation, temporality, as well as idiomatic formulae; not to forget the "general sense" of the passage. What he is looking for is evidence of consistent patterns of cooccurrence between the preterit and some set of context types, and between the perfect and a different set. As a supplementary check, he submits the examples to a pair of native English-speaking
informants, who render their judgments on the acceptability and likelihood of each example from the modern English standpoint, comparing it with the presumed modern equivalent. Where there seems to be a substantial agreement between the modern choices and those made by Chaucer and Gower, we will have a *prima facie* case against Visser's randomness hypothesis (just because the modern "control" is not random). Of course, the business of asking modern speakers to guess what Chaucer would have said had he been a writer of our times is full of pitfalls. Sometimes the informants do not agree with each other; sometimes I do not agree with them. But it is still useful to make comparisons, if only to point out those instances which provoke strong rejection by modern speakers, while not ignoring the many cases which are agreeable.

Bauer does acknowledge that some passages appear to use the available tenses in a freewheeling fashion: he gives examples of a mixture of present, present perfect, and preterit, without perceptible difference of meaning (cf. pp. 101-02):

> To Atthenes is he goon the next way.  
> And to the court he wente upon a day,  
> And at the gate he profreth his servyse

And:

> She thonketh hym upon hir knees al bare,  
> And hoom unto hir housbonde is she fare,  
> And told hym al...

But Bauer denies that this is typical. Visser's explanation that the interchange is motivated metrically and rhythmically does not address cases where there is no strong advantage: *hath nome/ is come* is not a better rhyme than *nam/ cam*, both of which appear in Chaucer (p. 103).
6.7. Bauer's important discovery is that there are certain adverbs which go exclusively (or nearly so) with the preterit, and others which favor the perfect. This in itself provides some grounds for modifying Visser's claim about tense-interchangeability. The adverbs *whilom* (meaning "before", "formerly"), *ferst, erst, never* (see below), *whan*, and *thanne* all strongly favor the preterit, especially when used in a noniterative sense (pp. 113 ff.). This is perhaps clearest with *when*-clauses:

> [G] When a temporal clause introduced by *whan* refers to a particular point of the past (in the sense of 'on the occasion that', and not 'whenever'), the preterit is the normal thing in Chaucer and Gower, as in modern English. (pp. 117-18)

On the other hand, the adverbs *er this*, *er now* prefer the perfect, strongly so in cases of iterative action: For *he hath write many a letter er this* (p. 121), or continuous state (*What thou er this for loves sake Hastfelt...*)—Bauer does not distinguish the latter category clearly. Given the difficulties of assessing the original intent of the authors, it is interesting to see that there was a general correspondence between the preterit and THEN-adverbs, and between the perfect and KNOW-adverbs; this eliminates the possibility that the tense distribution was not contrastive, only complementary. (The opposition was apparently not controlled by iterativity any more then than it is now; as we have seen, the repetition of events only makes it more likely that the "up to now", "so far" meaning of the perfect can come into play.)

The deviations from modern use have considerable interest of their own. We may mention *right now*, which nowadays seems to go only with the present tense; in Chaucer it goes with the perfect and with the preterit, as in:

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...Wyser men than thou,
As thou hast herd, assenteden right now
To my porpos...

We would presumably say [just now]. (Cf. p. 125)

Adverbials like since, which require the perfect in current
English, are also found with the preterit in Chaucer (p. 134).\textsuperscript{13}

...I saugh hym heere nat wirche work Syn Saterday...
I saugh you moght this fortenyght or moore
Thou seydest no word syn thou spake to me

And last we take note of never, which

\textsuperscript{[G]}
appears only with the preterit in Chaucer as well as
Gower, never with the perfect, not even where the refer-
ence is clearly 'never up to the present moment' (e.g.
ever yit, never yit er this, never sithe since,
ever yit unto this day, etc.). (p. \textsuperscript{126})

Examples are:

A wonder thyng, which ye saugh nevere er this

Never erst er now herde I of swich mateere [matter]

Apparently, never so strongly requires the preterit that it "overrides"
the other elements er this, etc. which normally prefer the perfect.

Of course, not all instances of never strike us as odd (cf. p. 127):

Never erst...ne viste [knew] I what ye mente.
But now...I knowe youre entente

For wende [considered] I nevere by possibility
That swich a monstre or merveille myghte be

Oddly enough, while never is quite rigorous in its tense-choice, ever
is not; we find

...if evere love or throuthe
Heth ben, or is, bitwixen the and me

In al that evere ye have seid
as well as

But I to yow be also good and trewe
As evere was wyf, syn that the world was newe

Myn housbonde is to me the worst man
That evere was sith that the world bigan

The worthieste of all kiththe,
Which evere was tofore or siththe

(Cf. pp. 129-30) Bauer’s informants thought the latter examples more
"natural" if changed to the perfect, but it is interesting to note the
common use of expressions like that's the dumbest thing I ever heard
(cf. discussion of the "colloquial preterit", below). Actually, Bauer
finds that ever examples can be divided into two groups, according to
whether ever has the interpretation "at any time", or else "at all
times, always". In the former case ("at any time") the preterit is
normal (p. 129); in the latter ("at all times") the perfect is normal,
in fact exclusive with iterated telic events. (P. 131—it is to be
noted, however, that the examples Bauer provides of the last-mentioned
type also contain perfect-favoring adverbs, evere yit, and evere...sith.
Obviously we would need more cross-checks to establish that the
category of "iterative telic" predicates is independent of other
factors.) That the preterit is never found in these latter cases is
not so surprising, since all but a scattered handful of the cases in
point seem to refer to a time span up to the now of the narrative,
which we regard as the special domain of the perfect.

But what about the perfect in:

...Hanybal
That Romayns hath venquysshed tymes thre  (cf. p. 135)
I am she which that saved hath youre lyf  (cf. p. 140)
I am youre doghter Custance...
That whilom ye han sent unto Surrye (cf. p. 115)

Of this (the so-called "historical perfect") Bauer says:

[6] it is quite difficult to see how such a vacillation could come to be, at a time when the norms of preterit and perfect use were firming up. It can hardly be a matter of style, as many have supposed. The free choice according to rhyme and meter can only be the consequence, not the cause of the confusion. It must therefore have a different source...
...a direct imitation of French usage is not unthinkable... (pp. 104-05)

Factors supporting the influence-of-French theory include the following: such usage didn't appear in Middle English until well after (about a century after) it was current in French; Chaucer and Gower were both familiar with French (Chaucer learned Latin and French as a youth, and was in France in positions ranging from military prisoner to ambassador; Gower wrote poetry in French before writing in English); Chaucer has his educated characters utter instances of the historical perfect, as well as rustic characters, so it is not meant as an oddity of the illiterate.\textsuperscript{14}

If the perfect was the newcomer in English, it would have been the marked member of the opposition with the preterit: it should always have its particular time-meaning, while the preterit might have gone on for a long time as unmarked, until it became "polarized" with the perfect (as seems to have been happening in Middle English).\textsuperscript{15}

This makes the appearances of the "historical perfect"—the perfect acting like a preterit—more striking, especially in view of the fact that such uses later became unacceptable, as they normally are today. If there had been a native and widespread trend toward the
historical perfect, we might have expected it to wind up with the
disappearance of the preterit, as happened, by and large, in French.
English seems to have retreated from this extension of the perfect;
this may also argue that it was a foreign influence.\textsuperscript{16}

The fact that there are relatively few examples in Chaucer
which give a perfect where we would now expect a preterit (cf. examples
with \textit{since}), while there are quite a number of cases where we would
use a perfect for Chaucer's preterit (especially \textit{never since} and other
combinations with \textit{never}) suggests a general trend in the distribution
of verb forms; the perfect is taking over, or at least sharing, some
of the earlier domains of the preterit. Bauer specifically suggests
that in the restriction of \textit{never} to the preterit

\begin{quotation}
[6] we have an old idiomatic use of the preterit, still
common in Chaucer's time, which was only later supplanted
by the perfect more 'suitable' to these examples. (p. 134)
\end{quotation}

He considers archaism also present in the decided preference for the
preterit in passages relating to Biblical topics\textsuperscript{17}:

\begin{quote}
And God, that made after his ymage
Mankynde...

This finde I writen, how Crist bad
That noman other scholde sle

Thus bothe an angel and a man,
The whiche of al that God began
Be chief, obeien goddes myht
\end{quote}

though it seems a bit hasty to consider these cases "odd" (p. 136);
Bauer seems to have something like current relevance on his mind at
this point, as when he says that the modern English speaker must use
the perfect in
'Artow [art thou] come hider to han fame?'
'Nay, for sothe, frend', quod y;
'I cam nought hyder, graunt mercy,
For no such cause...

because "the speaker is still present" (p. 138). As we know from earlier discussion, it is entirely possible that the preterit is chosen here to refer, eg. to "when I came here, my thought was...", or as Jespersen (1931) puts it:

A person on arriving may say "I have come (in order to..."
or else "I came...": the idea of the latter sentence is something like: "When I decided to come, my reason was..." (p. 66)

6.8. Let's summarize the phenomena we have observed in regard to the apparent "deviations" from modern expectation of tense use in Chaucer and Gower. The crucial fact was Bauer's finding that there were strong statistical preferences for specific adverb-tense cooccurrences. The adverbs fall out into two groups which can generally be identified with those we termed in Chapter 4 +THEN adverbs and -THEN (or XNOW) adverbs. Iterative predicates make it "easier" to have the up-to-now reading than single-event predicates; perhaps there was still something of a resistance against using the perfect for purely "abstract" forms of extension into the present (such as are often called "current relevance", cf. Chapter 2). Some adverbs that are nowadays limited to +THEN or -THEN were not fixed in Chaucer's time, e.g. just now and since.
Others were constrained in that period, but have since become variable, *e.g.* never. (The closely related *ever* had already "loosened up".) Thus we have to reckon with a number of shifts in the categorization of adverbs, which itself requires that there must have been categories to shift. Usage was not simply random.

Next, there is reason to believe that instances of the preterital use of the perfect were in part a borrowing from French practice, which Chaucer and Gower were intimately familiar with. The apparently random use of the perfect may represent a foreign "overlay" on the native system, rather than a native confusion. We cannot prove this, but it is a reasonable explanation. Moreover, since the deviations in favor of the perfect were fewer than deviations in favor of the preterit, there cannot have been complete equivalence. This is just the pattern we would expect if the preterit, which had once held exclusive sway in the field of the past, had been obliged to share its territory with the newcomer, the perfect. A preference for the preterit in the Bible may reflect simple archaism. (Also, if free variation had existed between the (marked) perfect and the preterit in its "perfect function", why didn't one or the other form disappear? Whence came the new opposition?)

Finally, and most speculatively, there is a question about the influence of literary artifice on the normalcy of literary creations. This topic we have not attempted to pursue (Bauer is skeptical about it); but it surely must be considered as a possible variable. (There is some indication that the apparently random use of preterit and perfect in Old French poetry was a characteristic of certain literary
genres, so that there were in effect, two different linguistic systems being employed. See Foulet (1920).)

6.9. Despite the disputationes one may enter into over many of Bauer's specific examples, at least the outline of the case against randomness is visible. His figures are certainly rather strong:

[6] The constantly accentuated differences between Middle and Modern English usage are unmistakable, as against the similarities which tend (understandably) to be passed over, but the differences are statistically less significant than one might expect. Similar usages amount to more than 94% (Gower 96%) with the preterit—if we exclude the very frequent cases with (n)ever—and 97% with the perfect (95.7% Gower). (p. 143)

Thus he considers the preterit and perfect to be operating essentially in the present-day fashion already six centuries ago:

The oppositions...are formally and functionally already the same in the language of Chaucer and his contemporary Gower as today. Linguistic change here really means change in the linguistic norm, without alteration of the abstract system of functional relations. (p. 144)

If Bauer's conclusions are justified, and are applicable to writings of the same period generally, then we are put on notice that Visser may have not gone far enough in his own demonstration. The Visser position of the "unsettled, pell-mell, uses of the preterite and the perfect in older English" (1973, p. 2192) really needs a systematic defense of its own. It is not enough to point out variations from

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the modern norms; we must also learn if the variations are consistent in their inconsistency. If there were true randomness, then of course it would be difficult to find the semantic roots of the modern English usage of preterit and perfect in the original opposition with stative have + participle construction of a thousand years ago. Such a complete separation would seem, on the face of it, to be as unlikely as the opposite hypothesis that the modern perfect is all but unchanged from its precursor in Old English (cf. Gallagher's theory). For the present, we have contented ourselves to show that, first, the perfect was a past tense from very early, and so could have been a semantic competitor of the preterit; and second, that some evidence is available which strongly suggests that the perfect did not behave identically with the preterit, and therefore was semantically opposed to the preterit.

6.10. As an addendum to the historical debate, it may be noted that Visser's own chronology of the "changeover" from old to new verb systems is not entirely consistent. He compares (1966, p. 751) two English translations of the Bible, that of Wycliff (c 1380) and that of Tyndale (1534), observing several instances in which a preterit in the earlier version is replaced by a perfect in the later one, e.g.
(Wycliff) thou lord in the begynnynge foundidist the erthe
not to aungels god sugettid the world

(Tyndale) in the begynninge hast layde the foundation of
the erth
He hath not vnto angels put in subieccion the
worlde

This is supposed to show that "the now prevailing system of discriminating [the tenses] was gradually developing" (ibid.), but it is not at all certain that the translators held the same view of the semantic intent of the original (the familiar translation problem). If the relatively conservative English admitted in the Bible serves as an indicator of the latest date fixible for the solidification of the modern system, then it is difficult to reconcile the chronology suggested by the Bible with that offered in the same place by Visser in response to "anomalies" of usage by the premier English dramatist:

It is only after the time of Shakespeare that the preterite and the [perfect] are used as they are used nowadays... (ibid.)

He is thinking of such examples as the lines from Much Ado, V, i (1599):

Runs not this speech like iron through your blood?--
I have drunk poison while he utter'd it.

Actually, it is not impossible to find parallel usages in modern English: "I've figured the whole thing out while you were sleeping."

I am not quite comfortable with this combination of tenses; perhaps it would be better to say that Shakespeare's "deviations" presage a continuing indeterminacy in a percentage of modern instances.

In any case, we find grammarians haggling over the "correctness" of preterit and perfect usage within two centuries of Shakespeare; we

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cited Pickbourn's (1789) prescriptions in CR terms (Chapter 2, Section 4), and Visser repeats Lewis Brittain's (1778) criticism of Shakespeare's line *When that the poor hath cried, Cesar hath wept* from Marc Antony's funeral oration:

The style here is narrative: Cesar was then no more. It should therefore be, 'When the poor cried, Cesar wept'... (p. 752)

Jespersen's explanation of the line (see Chapter 2, Section 9 above) relied on identifying an "iterative" value with the perfect—which would presumably make use of the "noniterative" preterit inappropriate in the context. Zandvoort (1932, p. 117) defends the perfect as one of his "experientials" (cf. Chapter 2, Section 10). Our own defense would rest on the simple conceptualization of Caesar's influence and life as part of the XNOW, which is not strictly determined by the actual moment of demise (the reader is referred especially to Chapter 2, Section 8). A rather similar rationale seems to lie behind an objection to the wording of the English Bible made by Dean Alford (1864), again culled from Visser's wide-ranging research (1966):

we read, in the original, that St. Paul finding certain disciples at Ephesus, asked them "Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed—when ye first became believers?" To this they answered, "We did not do so much as hear whether there were any Holy Ghost." On which St. Paul asked them, "Unto what then were ye baptized?" They replied "Unto the baptism of John." Then he explained to them that John's baptism, being a baptism of repentance, did not bring with it the gift of the Holy Ghost. In this the narrative is unintelligible [in the standard English version]. It has made St. Paul ask the converts, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" So far, indeed, all would be clear; for they certainly had not, though this does not represent what was said by the Apostle. But it is their answer which obscures the history. "We have not so much as heard," they are made to say, "whether there be any Holy Ghost." Strange indeed, that
these disciples, who had probably been for years in the Church, should during that time, and up to the time when St. Paul spoke, never have heard of the existence of the Holy Spirit. Render the words accurately, and all is clear. (p. 752)

But now we have reached the modern era. We will probably never have a firm notion of the historical progress of the perfect; the data carry us only so far. Even less firm is the course of future developments—but let us see what signs there may be.

9.11. Though the current English opposition between preterit and perfect is strong, the opposition has proved notoriously unstable in other languages known to us historically. Vanneck (1958) remarks that many Indo-European languages have alternately lost and reintroduced [it] at various times in their histories. Thus, though Latin and Gothic had only one tense to do duty for both aorist [= preterit] and perfect, the Romance and modern Germanic languages subsequently developed a new compound tense to supply much the same shade of meaning as the original (e.g., Greek) perfect. Since then, modern spoken French and several Germanic languages (e.g., Swiss German, Yiddish, Afrikaans) have once more ceased to distinguish between preterite and perfect. (p. 237)

Vanneck, a native speaker of British English, thinks that there are signs that in modern spoken American English, the distinction between preterite and perfect is beginning to be lost...Very many speakers no longer feel any instinctive need for the perfect tense in a number of contexts which traditionally require it. (ibid.)

Culled from his considerable contact with American English, encroachments of what he calls the "colloquial preterit" are found in examples like the following:

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(a) He isn't there now. I don't know what happened to him.
(b) Spain's a nice country. I know some people who were there.
(c) Hurray! He did it again!
(d) Darn it! I did it again!
(e) Yes, he's here. I just saw him.
(f) You missed him. He just went out.
(g) Did you have lunch (yet, already)?
(h) I didn't pay for this book yet.
(i) That show's still on. I saw it twice.
(j) I live in New York, but I never saw the St. Patrick's Day Parade.

Cases (d), (f), (g), and (h) seem to exemplify the difference we noted earlier (Chapter 4) between British and American categorizations of adverbs: in British English, these particular adverbs must go with the perfect, in American English they may go with the preterit—and Vanneck maintains that they normally do go with the preterit in American. The others may have their preterites for reasons that are not apparent in isolation, e.g. in (i) I saw it twice might be referring to some prior period, such as _last week, during the early part of its run_, or _when I was in New York_. Only if we could discover from the horse's mouth that he wasn't thinking about any particular past period, could we really claim that the "expected" perfect has been replaced by the preterit. It seems to me that (c) and (d) could just as well appear in the perfect: _Hooray! He's done it again! and Darn it! I've done it again!_ If British English uses exclusively the perfect (apparently the case), then it is British English which has neutralized the distinction, not American English.
Actually, there sometimes seems to be a preference one way or the other on strict grounds of idiomaticity of the particular expression. Vanneck notes (p. 240) that *You've had it!* was imported into England with no change, but *You said it!* passed customs as *You've said it!* which strikes my American ear as ludicrous. Consider on the other hand that *You've had it!* sounds just as odd if we switch to the preterit: *You had it!* These idioms would not constitute a very good argument for the claim that the normal "shades of meaning are obliterated" (p. 239).

As to whether the occurrence of the preterit with adverbs like *yet*, *already*, etc. means the loss of a semantic nuance, we could argue that the presence of the adverbs, which so clearly refer to the characteristic time-span of the perfect, remove the burden of temporal contrast from the verb and allow a neutralization of the forms in favor of the preterit *without loss* of the temporal nuance. Possibly something similar may have happened in the history of French, and (partially) of German, except that the neutralization went in favor of the perfect.

Why there should be this difference in "direction" of the neutralization is in no way apparent. Vanneck theorizes that the continental predominance of the perfect may have fostered the overcompensating use of the preterit in the New World (and in turn a counter-acting "hypercorrect perfect" as seen in *as I have predicted to you two years ago*, p. 240):

the great majority of non-British immigrants...have this in common, that they are not used to differentiating between the perfect and the preterite in their own spoken mother tongue. (p. 241)

More confusion may come from a collision with English-speakers who favored the preterit:
Another important influence is that of Irish English, which may well prove to be the original source of the American colloquial preterite, since a similar use of the preterite is very common in Ireland. (ibid.)

Yet another speculation on the preference for the preterit points the finger at the school-marm:

The reason for the Americans' preference may perhaps lie in the rule forbidding the use of the English perfect in any connection with any period of time that does not extend up to the present moment: the English speaker cannot say, as so many non-English-speakers can, "Yesterday I have finally succeeded." Most uses of the perfect in English consequently suffer from an inherent chronological vagueness, which makes the tense seem less objectively vivid than the preterite, except when applied to the very recent past. (p. 242)

This would have force only if the converse restriction against, e.g.

*so far I didn't finish     is distinctly less powerful.

Another writer who has observed the peculiar American propensity for the preterit is Defromont (1973). He cites examples from Arthur Miller's play Death of a Salesman where the verb phrase has "clearly resultative" bearing on the context of utterance, yet we find the preterit:

There's such an undercurrent in him. He became a moody man.

Here, we brought you some flowers.

Defromont advises that the preterit "is not incompatible" with current relevance; it is just that the preterit

[F] in Standard British English presupposes an explicit or implicit reference to a period or a moment of the past. (p. 102)

Being a dedicated CR theorist, Defromont is somewhat puzzled. He suggests that CR is becoming unmarked: "only the context can indicate if it exists or not" (p. 103). In cases like
Well, I didn't figure it yet, but...

Maybe you saw it already.

the "present point of reference" (which Defromont considers a distinctive property of the perfect; but cf. our commentary on EB theories, Chapter 5).

is explicitly marked in the statements themselves by the use of already and yet... (p. 104)

(This was the substance of our argument against Vanneck that the preterit with such adverbs does not necessarily represent a semantic neutralization, only a syntactic one.) Other adverbs seem to be developing a similar pattern:

The combination just + [preterit] is frequent in the US and is gaining ground in Great Britain: here we have, it seems, an irreversible evolutionary process. (p. 105)

What conditions provide for the retention of the perfect (where the preterit is also possible) in American? Defromont considers it a matter of formality vs. informality: in

Miss Forsythe, you've just seen a prince walk by.

the substitution of the preterit would be "too casual" ("trop familer");

In short, it is a stylistic motive which compels the speaker to respect the syntax [i.e. the normal use of the perfect]... (p. 106)

And what is the root of the confusion of perfect and preterit, or rather the tendency toward loss of the perfect? Defromont sees it mainly in the light of phonology:

a phonological change—the loss of the auxiliary have—is the starting point for a grammatical change: the substitution of the [preterit] for the [perfect]. (p. 110)
He argues that since all but about sixty (a "small minority") of English verbs do not have distinct forms for the preterit and the past participle, whenever the forms of the auxiliary have are weakened in pronunciation to the point of disappearance, all that's left is a "de facto" preterit: I have told him > I've told him > I told him. The weakening process is particularly noticeable where consonant clusters of complexity would occur with the full perfect: I've just bought a hat contains the spoken cluster [vð̂] which the "law of least effort" works to simplify into [ð̂]. If speakers regularly eliminate the auxiliary with verbs which then are ambiguous between preterit and perfect, "they are hardly going to have recourse to its services" when the forms remain distinct: thus we find I seen (in perfect meaning only, or ambiguous semantically?) appearing naturally in the mouths of the non-upwardly-mobile:

A very important socio-psychological phenomenon intervenes at this point: few people of our times are disposed to commit an 'error' which would automatically class them among those who have no grammar; whence the instinctive self-correction of the 'class-conscious' speaker... (p. 110)

Actually, it would be interesting to know if (some?/all?) speakers who do say I seen ever say I saw or I have seen, and especially, if they distinguish the forms in a way analogous to the standard perfect/preterit contrast. Only in this way could we establish a genuine neutralization of the opposition, or find out if the preterit has become the unmarked form, while the perfect retains its status as a marked form. In a historical perspective, the unmarking of the preterit would put the verb system (in this particular area) into the same state it seems to have had in Old English, when the perfect

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was just starting out its slow process of developing into a strong contender for certain of the semantic territory previously controlled by the preterit. This would place it in striking opposition to the other major Western languages which have almost universally\textsuperscript{20} tended to downgrade and discard the forms of the preterit, heading toward a future with only the now-ambiguous perfect.

And so we conclude our diachronic survey of the English preterit/perfect opposition. I hope it has become clear how heavily one's view of the "real" nature of such oppositions weighs upon the evaluation of historical examples as well as those of the present day, especially as to the degree and kind of systematicity which has prevailed or does prevail. If any one message emerges from this study, it is that, at least in some realms, "facts" do not exist outside of theories, and that one can only strive for consistency, hoping that objectivity will follow close by.
FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER 6

1. There appears to have been a parallel change during the growth of the modern French perfect from the original Latin structure which had purely stative force, as Benveniste (1968) argues. As long as habère was linked up with purely adjectival participles, it would not have tended in the direction of a past tense; but when other kinds of verbs than those which restrict themselves to a literally stative interpretation began appearing, the true perfect tense began its growth. Benveniste considers the "sensory-intellective" verbs to have led the way—verbs of understanding, discovering, realizing, seeing, etc. (p. 87). E.g. hoc compertum habet, "this learned he-has". And later: episcopum invitatum habes, "the bishop invited you-have".

None of this comes to light so long as one remains satisfied with repeating, as do so many textbooks, that il a une lettre écrite ["he has a letter written"]; il a ses vêtements déchirés ["he has his clothes torn up"] is quite close, almost to the point of synonymy, to il a écrit une lettre ["he has written a letter"]; il a déchiré ses vêtements ["he has torn up his clothes"], an analysis triply in error, from the points of view of description, of history, and of general theory, and one which, worse, bars its correct formulation by creating confusion at the heart of the problem. (p. 89)

Compare with discussion of Gallagher, to follow.

2. Gallagher states that there are several different types of periphrastic perfects to be distinguished, as "even those containing have + en do not constitute a homogeneous class" (p. 48). (Also classed as "perfect", though not necessarily periphrastic, are "all constructions with already", ibid.) The types are given as

- **Perfective:** containing what we have called "telic" or "goal-defined" predicates, as in he has written a book

- **Durational, Perfective:** indicating a state or action continued over a period, but not continuing through the present, as in he has lived there before

- **Imperfective:** indicating the same as Perfective, except with continuance through the present, as in he has lived there a year now

- **Attributive:** "simply a description of an accomplishment or characteristic of what is named by the surface subject" as in John has never betrayed a friend; this is said to be the typical function of the perfect with intransitive verbs (p. 50).

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On p. 52 Gallagher limits her description of the periphrastic perfect as a type of "possessive" have so that it applies to only one type of perfect; on the evidence of the examples used, this type seems to be the non-durational Perfective (John has confused Henry). Such examples are said to denote a present state of the object which is "possessed" by the subject (pp. 52 ff.); but later, on p. 72, the example John has thrown away his old books is said not to refer to present state, but to "refer only to the past". Gallagher seems to believe that cases such as the latter must have an entirely different underlying structure, and it is more or less accidental that it should have the same surface structure as the "present state" cases. In this framework, the cost of assimilating the deeper structure of "present state" perfects to the structure of "possessive have" is that all the other types of perfect are left out in the cold--all the types for which "no analysis...will be proposed" (p. 52). See also Chapter 4, footnote 23.

3. Refer to Chapter 5, Section 11, especially footnote 16.

4. Comparable examples in the present tense are much harder to come up with, since the simple present has habitual or generic meaning within when-clauses, as in: when I check on the toast. An interesting study of the factors which influence the interpretation of the Spanish preterit, as conclusive, inchoative, etc., is found in Bolinger (1963). Similar remarks apply to English.

5. For similar reasons, we rejected taking interpretive strategies as the basis of underlying structural analyses in Chapter 5, Section 8; see also footnote 11 of that chapter.

6. The reader is reminded not to be confused by the term "past passive participle" which is commonly applied to the -ed participle. The -ed participle is by no means always "past". Jespersen (1931, pp. 92-93) observes that among "non-conclusive", i.e. atelic verbs (see Chapter 4),

we find verbs denoting feelings, states of mind, etc.: the activity, if any such is implied, is not begun in order to be finished...If the participle is used as an adjunct, it does not indicate anything about time: an honored colleague, an admired friend, a despised scoundrel, a merited rebuke, a reserved expression on his face...If such a combination is placed in a sentence denoting some time in the past, the participle indicates merely contemporaneousness: he was a well-known barrister, etc.

If honoured, etc. are "past" participles in has honoured and the like, then such a distinction is entirely dependent on syntactic context, and is not a well-founded characterization of the participle itself. This extends to denominal -ed adjectives indicating some sort of possession, "which (more or less by definition) means possession that
DOES NOT result from an earlier act of acquisition" (Hudson (1975) p. 71)
E.g.: a bearded man, but *a wifed man. Pierce (1971) avers:

the analysis of -ing and -ed, not as inflective suffixes
denoting progressive and past tense forms of verbs but as
derivative morphemes which form pure-noun-like themes in
the case of -ing, now called gerunds, and pure-verb-like
themes in the case of -ed, now called participles, is
getting much closer to the real structure of English...
(p. 93)

It is not to be forgotten that -ed participles need not be "passive"
either: a fallen angel, the risen sun, escaped prisoners (cf. Jespersen, p. 93). See also Visser (1966, p.122ff.).

7. Bolinger (1973) gives several syntactic tests that can be used
to distinguish stative predicates from nonstatives; one of these is
the adverb all preceding adjectives (p. 61):

The virtue of all is that it discriminates the uses
of be which are most difficult: with past participles
and adjectives...With past participles we find:

The house is all painted. (state)
*The house was all painted by the workman. (process)

Bolinger uses all mainly to test for "accidental" predicates as
opposed to "essential" predicates, but it serves our purposes here.

8. Contrary to Gallagher, p. 53: "for most perfectives expressed
with a periphrastic perfect, there is a corresponding stative passive
form." Friderén gives intransitive telic verbs "having a past participle
that can function as an adjective attribute" the special name "mutative
verbs" (1948, p. 40).

9. Compare this with Visser's comment (refer to Section 3 above) that
"the time-sphere of e.g. he haefð begen fet gescód ["he has both feet
shod"] is decidedly the present...

10. The situation was formerly complicated by the use of be not only
as the verb of present stative expressions (he is prepared = he is
ready), but as the present passive auxiliary (he is prepared = he is
being made ready). In older English, "statal is" was rendered by
forms based on wesan ("be") while the passives were made with the
forms of weorðan ("become"), as Cristendom worð icast adoun (1297 AD).
After a period of vacillation, weorðan fell from use, leaving wesan
(and beon) forms to fill the role of the passive auxiliary as well as
the statal. This resulted in a rather high level of ambiguity, however,
since there were also perfects formed with be—not only intransitive
perfects but perfect passives as well! The perfect passives were
slowly withdrawn from the confusion by being formed more and more in

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variants like has been prepared. The older and newer forms occurred side by side for a long time, as in Shakespeare (Othello, I, ii, 44-46):

Cassio: ...You have been hotly called for.
When, being not at your lodging to be found
The senate hath sent about three several quests
To search you out.

Othello: 'Tis well I am found by you.

Other examples can be found in Martin (1971). It is only fairly recently that the has been-type passive has won out. Jespersen (1931) points out that in the Biblical passage Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake (Authorized Version),

most people would nowadays understand it as a generic saying (the persecution and blessing referring to all times), but as the Greek has a perfect participle (dedișmenoi), the R[evised] V[ersion] changed it into they that have been persecuted; and the 20th C. translation has Happy are those that have been persecuted. (p. 102)

The grammarian William Cobbet, writing in 1831 about the sentence The noble Earl found that the Countess was gone (as reported in Visser (1973) p. 2061), remarked

This is correct, though to go is a neuter [intransitive] verb. But gone, in this sense, is not the participle of the verb to go; it is merely an adjective meaning absent. If we put any word after it, which gives it a verbal signification, it becomes erroneous. That is to say, was absent out of the house; and this is nonsense. It must, in this case, be, he found that the Countess had gone out of the house.

The present passive reading of the periphrases with be has to some extent been replaced with get (he gets prepared by X), further reducing the ambiguities. (See Visser (1916) pp. 2031-33; see also footnote 12.)

11. The have/be opposition with intransitives has taken a new meaning in German:

In Modern German it is customary in the north to make a clear distinction between ich habe geschwommen 'I have been swimming' (non-terminate occurrence) and ich bin über den Fluss geschwommen [I have swum across the river] (terminate occurrence). (Friesch & Collinson (1962) p. 331)

thus implementing an atelic/telic contrast. Dutch does the same thing according to Visser (1973) p. 2044.
12. The Oxford English Dictionary notes the ambiguities of *dead* in earlier times:

To be *dead* was anciently used in the sense 'to die', and later in that of 'to have died'; also = 'to die at the hands of anyone, to be put to death, be killed'.

(Vol. III, p. 57)

As Visser (1973, pp. 2076-77) shows, *dead* inherited the role of past participle to Anglian *dédan = to kill*, producing the passive reading. The examples... *desperately be dead, ...must be dead...before...* could be interpreted in this light, except that the particular contexts do not support a passive reading. Clearer examples are:

*He waes ða dead þurh þa Æudeiscen.*
[He was then killed by the Jews.] (c1300)

*She is not dead [= has not been killed] at Tarsus, as she should have been*

By savage Cleon.  
(Shakespeare, Pericles V, i, 1608)

both cited on p. 2077. Collecting the various possible readings of *dead* together, we find *he is dead* four-ways ambiguous in isolation:

(a) = he lies dead (present state)

(b) = he gets killed (present passive/causative)

(c) = he has died (present perfect active)

(d) = he has gotten killed (present perfect passive/causative)

With other predicates, the ambiguity is considerably less, but Shakespeare's language, which in so many other ways is close to the present-day pattern, surprises us with:

Macduff: Your royal father's murdered.

Malcolm: 0, by whom?  
(Macbeth, II, iii, 99-100)

which modern hearers interpret first as like (a), only to find they must switch in favor of (d), i.e. "your royal father has been murdered". In the following case, a seeming (b) must be in reality a (c):

Margaret: ...Answer, clerk.

Balthasar: No more words. The clerk is answered.  
(Much Ado, II, i, 105-06)

The following is a (d) disguised as a (b):

I am commanded home.  
(Othello, IV, i, 251)

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In modern English, the reading (b) would require the progressive or some other explicit marking: "I am being commanded home", assuming the sense is not generic.

13. Mustanoja (1960) cites from the anonymous Sir Gawain of 1381:

here is wayth [game] fayrest hat I se3 [saw] pis seuen yer in sesoun of wynter (p. 498)

(See also Fijn van Draat (1930), pp. 375 ff.)

14. This last point is weak: if Chaucer was using the historical perfect to characterize English speakers in contact with French culture, the rustics should have eschewed such perfects entirely; unless they were imitating their cultured superiors, of course. It is also possible that a degree of native uncertainty about the perfect meshed fortuitously with the French influence. It is further possible that Chaucer was not controlling the historical perfect for characterization.

15. Cf. Mustanoja, p. 497:

Originally the preterit tense is used in describing events which take place at any stage of the past. The range of its occurrence becomes more limited as the new compound tenses, the perfect and pluperfect, gain ground, although the functional distinctions between the three tenses are not so marked in ME [Middle English] as they are today.

This situation would on the whole tend to favor the preterit statistically; Mustanoja states that

Figures based on two late ME literary texts [c. 1400 and 1490 respectively] suggest that even at the end of the period the general frequency of the perfect is many times smaller than that of the preterite. The notion obtained from these figures is perhaps not quite accurate, for there is reason to assume that the frequency of the perfect is somewhat higher in everyday speech, where the speaker naturally tends to look at events from the angle of the moment of speaking. (p. 505)

The figures referred to (from Mandeville's Travels and the Tretyse of Love) show the preterit/perfect ratio as 30.1\%:2.9\%, and 45.4\%:4.7\% respectively in the active voice; the pluperfect amounts to 1.3\% and 2.7\% separately. (p. 480)

Bauer's tabulation of tense/adverb cooccurrences in Chaucer and Gower did not show such a strong predominance of the preterit: for Chaucer, there were 372 preterits against 136 perfects, for Gower 287 preterits against 74 perfects. There were thus 36\% and 26\% perfects, respectively. (p. 113)
16. An oddity of the distribution is that Bauer finds the historical perfect predominantly with verbs of motion—30% in Chaucer (p. 103). Also a sign of outside influence? A different, but equally idiosyncratic distribution for the historical perfect is claimed by Mustanoja:

The historical perfect occurs mostly in statements containing an adverb of time, manner, etc., connected with the action or situation. It is particularly frequent in comparative clauses, in temporal clauses beginning with when and till, and also in consecutive and relative clauses: --and thus whan he his God hath served, He tok, as well he hath deserved, the Diadem and was coroned [Gower] ...

In many cases it is difficult to account for the use of the historical perfect, and there is reason to suspect that the use of the perfect instead of the preterite is often due simply to metrical considerations. (p. 507)

This suggests that the historical perfect appears in just those contexts where the burden of temporal information is borne by other elements than the verb itself, allowing the verb to be freed from its marking function. In Section 11 below, we will consider the possibility that the preterit is serving a similar "unmarked" role in modern English.

17. Mustanoja remarks on this subject:

Verbs referring to the creation of the world and other works of God are often in the preterit, although the time-sphere is rather that of the perfect:--he made the fisces in se...--he is fader of feith, fourmed sow alle...And saf sow fyve wittis. (p. 198)

Mustanoja is speaking of Middle English generally.

18. Vanneck is not dealing with cases where the preterit may be nothing but "a perfect with the auxiliary slurred or omitted" (p. 238), as in I'(ve) finished, which he considers a separate phenomenon. See comments of Defromont (1973), below.

19. Contrast this with Joos' (1964, p. 146) suggestion that the announcement They shot President Kennedy eschews the perfect as "too pedantic for such an occasion, that is, too frivolous".

20. Mexican Spanish may constitute an exception; see Lope Blanch (1961). I do not believe he has controlled his variables well enough to establish his case, however. On the loss of the preterit in French, German, etc., see Dietrich (1973), Poulet (1920), Meillet (1958), Schogt (1964), and Zieglschmid (1930).
Chapter 7

SUMMARY

The reader who wishes detailed information on the content of each chapter is referred to the summaries found at the end of each, from Chapter 2 on, except for Chapter 6, where the summary is placed in Section 8, followed by a section speculating about future developments. Here we will offer only an outline of the argumentation.

Chapter 1 provides a background for the work as a whole. It observes that a fundamental problem in describing how verb systems work is that of separating the many possible uses of a form from its intrinsic meaning. Many meanings that are commonly ascribed to particular forms are in fact dependent on context in a complex interaction. Sometimes the interactions are thought to be so consistent that they are identified as the structural meaning of the form—but this may be a mistake. A case in point is the opposition between the "perfect" forms of English—as in he has come—and the preterit forms, like he came. There is a bewildering variety of different theories as to the nature of this opposition, and there is a store of more or less traditional examples used to "prove" one theory or another. We have categorized the theories into four main types, according to their basic manner of characterizing the meaning of the perfect forms. In these classes, the perfect is analyzed as

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(a) the past of current relevance
(b) the past of indefinite reference
(c) the past of the extended now
(d) the past embedded in a present tense

Groups (a) and (b) are commonly encountered in the writings of traditional grammar. Group (c) is rather rare, and almost always is found in a "mixture" with (a) or (b). Group (d) is the product of recent developments coming out of the transformational/generative school of grammar; its approach to the problem is mostly indirect, but the arguments have certain points in common with the other groups.

It is the belief of the present author that group (c) offers the best account of the preterit/perfect opposition, in that it most successfully cuts away the "flesh" of inferential interpretations from the "bones" of structural signal-oppo-sitions. The inference-making capacity of speakers and hearers is a protean and intricate thing which contributes, in communication, information which is not, strictly speaking, present in the communication itself. It is impossible to study the operation of inference without taking into consideration specific types of context--the "pragmatic" element. A study of contexts reveals a number of important "clues" which direct the train of inference. These clues are lexical, syntactic, and sometimes not linguistic at all. They combine with the clue provided by the preterit/perfect choice itself to define the intended meaning of the choice.

We take a look at the question of whether or not the perfect forms are tenses or not. Our answer is that since "tense" identifies any verb form which relates some event to the moment of speaking (or
"coding", more generally), the present perfect and the other "finite" perfects must be tenses at least. What else they are is the subject of the following chapters.

Chapter 2 evaluates theories of the "current relevance" class. Current relevance has a number of different interpretations, but all of them presume that the meaning of the present perfect per se is an assertion about the current state of affairs. An example: he's gone to bed has the currently relevant meaning "he's in bed now, as a result of having retired." The difficulty with this notion is that there are any number of kinds of relevance, some of which are extremely vague and abstract, so that it is difficult—and arbitrary—to specify the actual content of relevance. Some of the main variants of current relevance are: recency of the event; present existence of something mentioned in the sentence, or of their "virtual" existence as influences in the present; present state of the subject; a continuance of a state or process into the present; continuing iteration of events; and the present possibility of an event. Each of these is examined in turn and found either too specific to work for all examples, or too general to define a contrast with the preterit.

In Chapter 3 we devote considerable discussion to supposed parallelisms between the ways nominal expressions have of being "definite", and the ways the preterit works as a tense. We find that though there are some similarities, it is neither necessary nor sufficient that the preterit refer to a definite past time, and the perfect to an indefinite past time. There are a number of instances in which the definiteness pattern seems to be contradicted, unless we make
significant adjustments in the sense of verbal "definiteness"; these adjustments move in the direction of the theories to be studied in the next chapter. Several rather elaborate schemata of tense in English are examined which incorporate an indefinite-past construction of the perfect. It is seen that they embody certain discrepancies and internal inconsistencies which lay them open to question, and vitiate the intended advantages of indefinite past theory.

Next, in Chapter 4, we pursue the elaboration of the "extended now" (XNOW) theory, which has been introduced casually at several points in preceding chapters in the course of criticism. We locate the essential feature of the theory in the writings of several grammarians, but only exceptionally in "pure" form. The characteristic feature of the theory is that it sees the function of the preterit as that of locating prior events within a time-period which is past and gone (a THEN period), while the present perfect locates prior events in an overall period which stretches up to the moment of speaking, and constitutes thus an "extended present". A general parallel with that/this oppositions elsewhere in the language is offered, together with a caution against too close an equation. A major part of the chapter is given over to an analysis of the adverbs which occur with one tense or with the other, or both: there are three types of adverbs whose classification is largely predictable from the nature of the theory, and is partly a relatively arbitrary lexical matter. (The exceptions do not fit with any of the other theories, either.) Some apparent exceptions find a natural explanation in the theory. But it is not only adverbs which bear on the interpretation of perfects (and preterits).
There are other factors, such as the "telic" character of some verbs (like drown which has an implicit event-terminus, as opposed to swim); telicness is itself the result of various contributing elements, such as noun phrases, negation, verb-particles, choice of prepositions, etc. There is also the "plausibility" of the event to consider, in various interpretations as single event, iterated events, or continuous state or process. On top of this is the normal expectation of what consequences an event may have, and how enduring they are. (This latter was discussed in some detail in Chapter 2, which also mentioned the role of a conversational-cooperation principle which constrains the speaker to say things in a way which will not mislead the listener into the wrong inferences.) A number of examples are examined where the uncertainty of one or another of these factors renders the meaning ambiguous or vague.

Chapter 5 discusses theories which derive the perfect from an underlying structure consisting of a preterit embedded beneath a matrix present tense. The reasons for this treatment come from a complex theoretical debate as to the limits of "abstractness" in underlying structures, and do not concern us directly; what is of importance is the formulation of the tense-theory itself. This is related to a number of claims about the nature of the perfect/preterit opposition which are reminiscent of the other theories discussed previously, but with some new twists. After finding a number of mechanical and philosophical problems, we conclude that embedded-past theories do not really offer an improvement on extended-now theories, in spite of their laudable explicitness and the fact that they serve other analytical aims fairly well.
Our interest in Chapter 6 is directed at the course of historical development. The perfect began with a purely "stative" meaning, which is preserved in modern expressions like *I have the door closed*. The claim has been made that before this structure could turn into a real perfect (like *I've closed the door*, which is not equivalent), it had to go through a period of free variation with the preterit. This makes the "old" sense and the "new" sense unrelated to each other, rather than joined in a process of continual development. We argue that it can be shown that the periphrasis was being used as a true past tense from an early stage in its history; therefore it could have been in competition with the preterit in the semantic field of past time. (The technique for this demonstration is similar to that used in Chapter 4 to account for the available readings of particular examples through examination of explicit and implicit items of context.)

Similar attention to the usage of Chaucerian times produces a picture of mutual distinctness between perfect and preterit, in contrast to the interchangeability hypothesis. Despite the uncertainties of this sort of analysis, a case can be made for the continuous growth of the perfect over the last several hundred years. The last part of the chapter asks where the preterit/perfect opposition is headed. This speculation is based on some highly tentative ideas about the increasing use of the "colloquial preterit" instead of the perfect. Since this pattern of change is just the opposite of what has happened in many other languages which have developed periphrastic perfects to compete with the preterit (the preterit then eventually losing out),
it appears necessary to have more information before making judgments about the course of future developments.

At the core of all this work lies a concern to free the analysis from a confusion between grammar and pragmatics. It is not claimed that this is always feasible, or even desirable, but it seems here to offer clarification of some long-standing problems in the analysis of the English verb.
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