REANALYSIS IN ENGLISH: THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE KORREL SHIFT ON THE VERB SYSTEM

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À Liliane
amie, collègue et muse;
que ça soit pour toi une invitation.

Résumé

Vers l'an 1500, quelque chose est arrivée au système du verbe anglais qui allait pour toujours changer la façon dont nous utilisons les verbes. Cette transformation, que nous avons nommée *Korrel shift*, se situe dans la conception de l'événement verbal. Avant de pouvoir utiliser un verbe pour exprimer un événement particulier (qu'il s'agisse d'une action ou d'un état), nous devons représenter l'intervalle de temps dont il est constitué. Étant donné le système temporel binaire (passé/transpassé) des langues germaniques, il nous faut avant toute chose déterminer la forme que prendra 'l'instant de durée' qui, comme le présent, n'est en réalité qu'un point dans le temps. Un point n'a pas de dimension propre; en ce, le présent peut être vu comme le tranchant d'une épée : il est impossible de s'y tenir, on doit prendre appui d'un côté ou de l'autre. Korrel (1991) a démontré, à travers une étude comparative de l'utilisation du *present perfect* anglais et de sa contrepartie néerlandaise, que l'anglais moderne a opté ici de débuter l'instant du côté à venir, inaccompli du tranchant, alors que le néerlandais, tout comme l'allemand, débute avec l'accompli.

Il est démontré ici que le vieil-anglais avait la même conception que le néerlandais moderne mais que, vers la fin du moyen-anglais, cette conception a changé pour celle que nous avons présentement. Puisque cette conception est à la base de la représentation du verbe, il est fort probable que ce changement ait eu plusieurs répercussions, aussi bien en syntaxe que dans l'usage. Quatre possibilités sont étudiées ici : la progression de *to* devant l'infinitif, l'avènement de la forme progressive, le développement du support par *do* et l'évolution des auxiliaires modaux vers une classe distincte de verbes.

Il est proposé (chapitre 4) que *to* fut ajouté à l'infinitif pour que celui-ci retrouve sa force nominale. Du même coup, c'est-à-dire avec l'ajout d'une distance avant l'infinitif, l'événement commence à être perçu comme n'ayant pas de portion accomplie puisque *to*, dans l'analyse effectuée par l'enfant, semblait marquer la portion

actuelle.

Dans le dernier chapitre, nous affirmons que les auxiliaires modaux, en anglais moderne, ont conservé une conception pré-*shift* de l'événement. Ceux-ci exaltent une sensation de passé, de partiellement accompli, ce qui permet de comprendre quelques-unes de leurs particularités. Mais, de façon plus générale, nous voyons que le statut particulier des modaux est le résultat d'un ensemble de forces, dont le *Korrel shift*. Comme avec l'auxiliaire *do*, par contre, la cause première se trouve ailleurs, bien que ce soit tout de même en grande partie une question de sémantique grammaticale.

Abstract

Around the year 1500, something happened to the verb system of English that was to change the way we use verbs for ever. This transformation, dubbed here the *Korrel shift*, occurred on the level of the conception of the verbal event. Before being able to use a verb to depict a particular event (be it a state or an action), we must represent the stretch of time that makes it up. Since the Germanic verb has a binary opposition, between past and non-past, it must answer the question of how to represent the 'moment of duration' which, like the present, is in reality only a point in time. Points have no dimension; in this, the present can be seen as the edge of a sword: it is impossible to stand on it, one must use part of either side for stability. Korrel (1991) has shown, through a comparison of usage between the English present perfect and its Dutch counterpart, that Modern English has chosen to start the moment on the 'future' side of the edge, to begin with a non-actualized part, whereas Dutch, like German, begins with an actualized part, the 'past' side as it were.

It is shown here that Old English had the same conception as Modern Dutch but that, towards the end of the Middle English period, this conception changed to the one we now have. Since this conception is at the heart of the representation of the verbal

event, it is to be expected that it would have other repercussions in both syntax and usage. Four such possibilities are studied here: the growth of the **to-infinitive**, the advent of the **progressive**, the rise of **do-support** and the evolution of the **modals** into a distinct class of verbs.

It is argued (Chapter IV) that *to* was added to the infinitive to give it back nominal strength and by so doing, *i.e.* by adding a distance before the infinitive, the verbal event began to be perceived as having no actualized part, as it was the *to* which seemed, in the child's reanalysis of the English data, to be marking the accomplishment part. This had the effect of bringing about a shift that equates the δ with the infinitive, giving it back some of its features of use. That is, the *to* is once again seen as a way to mark distance (on top of its being the nominalizer of the infinitive).

The inability of the Modern English simple form to express events in progress (events which began before the point of time reference and may evolve afterwards, in which change is still possible without affecting the lexical meaning of the verb) is seen as the result of the Korrel shift, as this change in the representation moment of duration transformed event time from partly accomplished to all-to-come. Three points extracted from the data (meaning, paradigm and dialect) reinforce the hypothesis. In Chapter II, we see that the shift finds its origin in the Northern regions and then spreads southwards, which is compatible with the development of the ME progressive. The absence of MnE grammatical rationale behind the use of the periphrasis in OE and eME corresponds to the nonexistence of the expressive demands of post-*Korrel shift* English. Furthermore, the difficulty of verbal regimen points to a non-grammaticalization of the construction as a paradigmatic verb form.

The central role played in the verb system by the auxiliary *do* is, many would agree, one of the preeminent features of present-day English. *Do* behaves as the support for negation and interrogation of non-auxiliary verbs, and is used as a mark

of emphasis and anaphoric ellipsis. It is established that, to all intents and purposes, there can be no relation established between the shift and *do* insertion in Modern English. Both the data (especially as concerns the spread of the form — from the South northward, instead of in a southward fashion) and the theoretical assumptions speak against such a relationship. An alternative analysis is nevertheless proposed to account for the more major changes.

In the final chapter, it is argued that the modals, in Modern English, retained a pre-*Korrel-shift* (*i.e.* a $\delta(\omega)$) conception of the event. The event has a 'feel' of the past, of the partly accomplished. This accounts for some of the particularities of these auxiliaries. But, more generally, we see that the status of modal auxiliaries is the result of a set of forces that made them up into a unique set of verbs, amongst these forces, the *Korrel shift*. As with the auxiliary *do*, however, the *cause première* lies somewhere else than in the *shift*, although it is still by and large a matter of grammatical semantics.

Acknowledgements

Chronologically speaking, I would have first to thank Professors Walter Hirtle and Patrick Duffley of the Université Laval; the former for having introduced me to Guillaume and laid the foundations of my scientific ventures into language, through ever flowing comments and advice, the latter for having guided me through my Master's thesis, which has become the basis of this one. Prof. Albert Maniet, also of Laval, I thank for having kindled in me the fire of historical linguistics. Once again, I would like to extend my gratitude to Dr Lia Korrel, for her work, which started it all.

To my adviser Prof. Rajendra Singh I say *shukayii*. Your comments, your help, are ever so responsible for my completing this work. And I should not forget Professors John Reighard and Brenda Hosington, my examination jury, for their questions, intuitions, references and encouragements. Also, John, for those bits of neighbourly hospitality.

Je ne pourrais passer sous silence le soutien maintes fois renouvelé de mon entourage et de ma famille durant ces nombreuses années d'errances et de convictions. Bref, tous ceux qui, me demandant le sujet de ma thèse, m'ont forcé à élaborer et ainsi à mieux développer les idées qui s'y trouvent.

Thank you, also, to all the linguists out there whose work I have sometimes plundered, sometimes tried to enhance and sometimes unjustly treated. This thesis, in this sense, is not the fruit of one man's work, but that of a whole community. Especially, I would like to thank my former colleagues, André for the incessant criticisms,

puzzlement. I should also not forget all those who pursued me with questions ever since I first presented this project at the eighth *Journées de Linguistique*.[1]

Abbreviations

AVM	Attribute-value matrix
eME	early Middle English
eMnE	early Modern English
GB	Government-Binding
HPSG	Head-driven Phrase Structure Grammar
ME	Middle English
MnE	Modern English
ModFr	Modern French
NP	Noun Phrase
OE	Old English
OFr	Old French
P&S	Pollard & Sag (1994)
TP	Transparancy Principle
VP	Verb Phrase
$\delta(\omega/\alpha)$	Moment of duration (Dutch-like/English-like)

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For small erections may be finished by their first architects; grand ones, true ones, ever leave the cope-stone to posterity. God keep me from ever completing anything. This whole book is but a draught—nay, but the draught of a draught. Oh, Time, Strength, Cash, and Patience!

Herman Melville,
Moby Dick: 149

Introduction

Ever since its beginning — which is at least as far back as the first steps towards comparative grammar — the science and art of historical linguistics has striven to uncover unity behind varieties of effects, be it in the form of a single mother language giving us a number of daughters, or a single phenomenon yielding a host of changes in a language (for example, the *Great Vowel Shift* in English). These last few decades have found historical linguistics looking for the source of various syntactic changes, especially in English.

Among Germanic languages, English holds a special place, from a linguistic point of view, especially with regard to the particulars of its verb. A quick comparison with the earlier state represented by Old English (OE) is enough to convince us of the many changes which the verb system of English has undergone since the earliest texts. A great majority of these changes occurred during the Middle English (ME) period (c. 1100 to c. 1500), so it is legitimate for us to ask in what way, if any, the changes are related. This study is undertaken in the hope of answering this question. It takes its source in another study which pointed to a possible transformation affecting the representation of the English verb.

Research in historical linguistics has always been intertwined with progress in our understanding of present-day states of affairs, of how language works synchronically. Quite understandably, since in order to see how things came to be, we must at least have a fairly good idea of how they currently are. And, inversely, "to know the past

is to understand the present" as a wise man once said.

And in this, the present thesis is no different; it presents facts of the evolution of the English language in the light of a new understanding of the synchronic reality. It is based on comparative work done in recent years on some differences between the verb system of English and that of Dutch, work which led to a diachronic analysis of part of the English verb. These analyses, the synchronic and the diachronic, are the subject of Chapter II.

But since the analyses presented here are set within a particular linguistic framework, the *Psychomechanics of language*, my first duty will be to expose its relevant claims and principles, and situate them within a current theory of syntax, in order for us to have a more complete theory of language to work with.

After that has been done, and the various changes the verb system of English has undergone (including the one which will be at the heart of this thesis) been presented, we will take a new look at some old data, some known problems, in an attempt to uncover the consequences of the change discussed in Chapter II on the system. Thus giving us a single source for a number of changes. Throughout the course of this thesis, a few other questions will be considered, like the relation between the *-ing* form of the verb and the infinitive, the status of double modals, etc.

The thesis is divided into two parts. The first one highlights the background of this research (theoretical frame, previous studies — *i.e.*, Korrel 1991 and 1993, and Bélanger 1995b — and overview of the changes in the verb system of English); the second focuses on a selection of four changes in an attempt to uncover their relation to the *Korrel shift* (fear not reader, this expression will be defined in Chapter II). So, as Morpheus said, "Let us leave this place. We shall seek answers. We may also seek questions."

Part I

Background

Si on efface l'avenir ainsi que le passé, la seconde présente se trouve dans l'espace vide, en dehors de la vie et de sa chronologie, en dehors du temps et indépendante de lui (c'est pourquoi on peut la comparer à l'éternité qui, elle aussi, est la négation du temps).

Milan Kundera
Les testaments trahis: 106

The chapters in this section deal with the historical and theoretical facts needed to undertake the study of the effects of what we shall refer to as the *Korrel shift* on the verb system of English. The first chapter deals more specifically with the principles of the *Psychomechanics of language* as developed by the French linguist Gustave Guillaume and his followers, and attempts at placing it within a more current syntactic theory. The second chapter (adapted from a Master's thesis presented to the *Département de langues et linguistique* of the Université Laval) addresses the problem of the shift, defining its meaning, and its location in the history of the language. The third chapter presents some of the changes undergone by the verb system of English since the OE period.

Chapter 1

Psychomechanics and HPSG

Introduction

During the first half of this century, in France, Gustave Guillaume was busy developing a theory of language he called the *Psychomechanics* (or "Psychosystematics") of language, mainly *via* the courses he gave at the *Collège de France*. His linguistic views however, being sometimes esoteric and not so widespread on the European continent or even in France, never quite made it to the mainstream of linguistics. Much has been said in American linguistics that now comes back to theories put forth by Guillaume, but perhaps more importantly, there is much that new theories of grammar could give to Psychomechanics and *vice versa*. As Psychomechanics mainly focussed on the word, it left much to be done in syntax.

But it is quite possible that what is currently being done in some of the contemporary syntactic theories (especially Head-driven Phrase Structure Grammar, HPSG) is quite compatible with Guillaume's theory — and even that a unification of the two could be effected to the best interest of both. It is important that we situate Psychomechanics within a larger frame including syntax, so as to be better equipped to understand its principles and the analyses they bring. I have chosen HPSG to express the syntactical part of this 'unified' frame as its focus and precepts are, sometimes

complementary, sometimes quite similar to those developed by Guillaume and his successors. There are, of course, many areas of contention, but not as much as would warrant a mutual rejection.

Since this thesis deals with a problem explicited through the principles of Psychomechanics, this chapter (and the ones which will follow) will principally be concerned with Guillaumian postulates and their consequences. As a second step in this chapter, we will have a view of some aspects of HPSG which seem most relevant in situating Psychomechanics within a grander scheme of things.

The view of HPSG presented here is taken principally from Pollard and Sag (1994) (henceforth, P&S). It is not my intention here to describe the whole of the theory exposed in this and other works on the subject; this is to be a preliminary look at the possibility of combining the theoretical resources of Psychomechanics and HPSG. Towards that end, only areas of similarities and some bones of contention will be addressed. I will not take up the various syntactic analyses developed in P&S, but rather the theoretical structure on which they are based. Those areas of research which as yet have not come under Psychomechanics's microscope will not be taken up. There may come a day when a more complete analysis of HPSG by Psychomechanics (and *vice versa*) will be done, but now is not the time.

I thus refer the reader to P&S — and all related products — for a detailed, and very interesting, *exposé* of a great part of the work done under HPSG. Before moving on, I would like to point out that most of the objections HPSG offers to GB principles I share in, as will betimes be shown in the following sections.

1.1 Principles

Psychomechanics is founded on the principle that one must look at the semiology of a form and its meaning (through intuition, introspection and native resources) in order

to determine its inner workings. That is to say that the first correlation to be made
— and it seems strange to say this, as one would expect, too often wrongly however,
this to be obvious — is between form and meaning (both lexical and grammatical).

1.1.1 Discursive intent

Psychomechanics is a mentalist theory of language, more particularly of the semantic
dimension of language, and as such places the cognitive processes of the speaker in
prime position. In Guillaume's view, language is not a *thing* but an *activity*. And
one of the determining factors in the cognitive processes of language is the discursive
intent (*visée de discours*) of the speaker:

> ...the intention of the speaker to give a linguistic representation to some aspect
> of experience, to create discourse that will express what the speaker 'has in
> mind.' It is this discursive intent that will determine whether a given clause
> is going to be active or passive, whether a noun or pronoun will be used for a
> subject, and so on (Hewson 1995: 1510).

Before one speaks, one must have something to say[1] and the wish to say it. Then he
will proceed to express his experience (real or imagined).

One of the means available to the speaker in his quest for expression is what
Guillaume called 'expressivity', *i.e.* when different constituent ordering, omission of
words, stress, etc., are used to give an added dimension to the utterance.[2] These
manipulations can become instituted in the language, as with the imperative form of
the verb whereby the verb stem (in IE languages) is invoked, without any trapping,
to express volition. Another example is the use of single word sentences, like "Cof-
fee?" or "Lights!" It has to be understood that the speaker of these holophrastic

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[1]even if it is not much, in a purely pragmatical way, and if, often, one knows one has something
to say only after it is or has been said!

[2]Expressivity can be seen as a specific instance of the more general concept of 'creativity', the
difference being that creativity can operate on every level.

expressions did not construct a 'full' sentence ("Would you like some coffee?", "Turn on the lights!") and then chopped off the constituents he felt were superfluous. In Psychomechanics, these utterances are construed as is in order to enhance an idea, to convey it in a different, somewhat more forceful way.

The idea of the *visée de discours* has been expanded upon by Valin (1981) with that of a *visée phrastique* by which the speaker chooses (unconsciously) the syntactic means for the expression of his discursive intent.

1.1.2 Tongue and discourse

Language in Psychomechanics is laid out on two levels: tongue (*langue*) and discourse (*discours*)[3]. This opposition is similar, yet not identical to de Saussure's duality of language:

> Guillaume preferred *discours* to Saussure's *parole* since the latter does not mark sufficiently well the distinction between the two modes of existence of language. "Parole" is less felicitous both because the "spoken word" does have a preconscious dimension and since the use we make of "tongue" need not necessarily be audible (Korrel 1991: 6).

It furthermore goes beyond the mere competence/performance opposition. What marks the distinction between competence and performance is that the former describes the extent of the knowledge a speaker has of a given language, the latter the way he actually speaks, with all the stops, false starts, errors, slips, etc. The tongue/discourse dichotomy also opposes the potential on the one hand and the actual on the other, but to a far greater degree than in, for instance, GB. **Tongue** is

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[3]We will follow the translation of *langue* and *discours* used by Hirtle and Hewson in translating Guillaume's *Principes de linguistique théorique*. They explain their choice of terms in the following way: "Consequently, after much soul searching, the translators decided to use the terms *tongue/language* to translate *langue/langage*, fully aware that this leads to certain infelicities, and to an unexpected extension of meaning for the English word *tongue*..." (Guillaume 1984a: xx)

the system of the language whence all the possible uses, in **discourse**, come. It is the *condition première* (this relation is not one of cause to effect but of potential to actual).

This finds its parallel in HPSG:

> The distinction between the system of constraints and the collection of linguistics entities that satisfies it can be viewed as corresponding to (...) Saussure's (1916) distinction between *langue* and *parole*. Though only the latter is directly observable, only the former can be embodied as a mental computational system shared by members of a linguistic community (P&S 58).

Like a computer software enables you to do many different things, so does tongue pose the conditions of possible use in discourse. To quote the translators' introduction to Guillaume 1984a:

> A fundamental key to understanding Guillaume is a clear grasp of the tongue/ discourse distinction. Tongue is the system, and discourse is what is produced by the use or exploitation of the system. (...) tongue is not a set of sentences, but a set of paradigmatically related parts that can be fitted together syntagmatically in significant ways to form an infinite variety of sentences (xxi).

Thus the distinction is made, as in other theories, between the system — the permanent, established feature of language — and the ephemeral (unestablished) products of this system: fleeting, transient, temporary utterances. According to Guillaume, if a phrase or sentence becomes established, it would then be a word in the mind of the speaker (1984a: 90). What is observed (the data) is discourse, what is searched for (the object of study) is tongue.

1.1.3 Potential meaning

One of the principal precepts of Psychomechanics is that, as Guillaume puts it: "Science is founded on the insight that the world of appearances tells of hidden things, things which appearances reflect but do not resemble" (Guillaume 1984a: 3). Furthermore, he points out that "We can explain to the extent that we have understood. We can understand to the extent that we have observed" (Guillaume 1984a: 69). This school of thought seeks to explain linguistic phenomenon through observation, not just of their physical part (the utterance itself), but also of the psychological reality underlying them — i.e. meaning. By observation of the different 'effects' a given construction brings out, we trace the underlying potential meaning.

The notion of potential meaning is at the heart of Psychomechanics research. The axiom states that words (as well as other parts of the language) all have a potential meaning responsible for all the observable actual (actualized) meanings — the various senses — the word has in its use. The potential meaning is a unified meaning from which springs out all the particular shades of a given word; it is the single prior condition at the source of the senses of the word. "The point is that actualization here is not a simple, univocal realization of a potentiality always yielding the same result, but rather a developmental process whose results differ depending on how much of the potential movement is realized" (Hirtle 1982: 40).

That is not to say that Psychomechanics takes the (strong) Aristotelian point of view of a fixed (ideal) meaning. The concept of meaning in Psychomechanics would be situated somewhere between the Aristotelian notion and Wittgenstein's view that there are uses, not meanings. In Psychomechanics, the meaning of a word has its limits; one cannot use a particular word in just any way, but neither can one predict their uses. In this way, meaning is constrained. These is a set of constraints that determine the boundaries of the word's possible uses, without making these limits 'overt'. One will never be able to place these boundaries exactly and say, before

this point it's okay, after it, it's not. There are clear possibilities as well as clear impossibilities and between them lies a region ill-defined.

One could say that meaning is a *strange attractor* of sorts: unpredictable yet contained within boundaries (however fuzzy they might be).[4] The usual representation of a strange attractor is the spacial dimensionalization of the variables of a system, *i.e.* the variables are translated into coordinates, so that the movement of a point can trace the evolution of the system in a multidimensional graphic. What emerges is a bound trajectory, often revolving around one or two poles, but where the point never takes twice the exact same path. The boundary cannot be exactly determined, but it is never crossed, except in short extraordinary cases. Take, for instance, the weather: never will exactly the same sequence occur twice, but it will never snow in the Sahara desert (if it does, things will be back to normal in no time, the system will have 'recuperated' the variable).

Potential meaning also holds true for grammatical forms such as plural "morphemes" (cf. Hirtle 1982), or verb forms, like the French *imparfait* (cf. Valin 1964: 33ff.). The same could be said of the English past tense: it represents something coming before the point of reference, either in a temporal (what the cognitivists would probably conceive as the prototypic meaning), physical or logical way ("If I drew a circle now, we would ...").

There is here a fundamental difference between HPSG and Psychomechanics — one that could nonetheless eventually be overcome — and that is the treatment of polysemy. We have already seen that Psychomechanics treats the various senses of a word as different actualizations of a same potential meaning. This point of view is not so strong in HPSG. For instance, P&S (364) give the following distribution: "adjectives (*taller*), prepositions (*nearer*), adverbs (*later*), count determiners (*more*,

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[4]This resembles the cognitivists' concept of prototype, differing in at least one important point, however: there is no single sense most representative of the potential meaning. Although, as I have said, some are more definitely in than others, depending on use.

fewer), mass determiners (*more, less*), or degree words (*more, less*)". Such a distribution could not be acceptable in Psychomechanics: often prepositions and adverbs differ only in use, not in meaning, as do 'mass' and 'count' determiners.

1.1.4 Time

A notion particular to Psychomechanics underlies the view of potential meaning, namely that of the operativity of language processes:

> In Psychomechanics the basic principle to explain how a morpheme or verb form can have multiple meaning — exhibit polysemy — and still retain its grammatical unity is *operativity*. Everything in language involves process. This principle is found in putting a sentence together, in putting a word together and even in each grammatical category that helps determine the part of speech the word belongs to (Korrel 1991: 5).

In order to understand the operativity, we have to consider time. This presupposes that there are processes involved in language, *i.e.* an operativity. An operation is needed for the construction of words in tongue, another is needed for the construction of phrases and sentences in discourse. Everything in language is process: "the act of language also includes the construction of words, and this too must take time, although it is far less obvious because the time involved in lexigenesis is so short that there is no way of measuring it, let alone perceiving it" (Hirtle 1985: 74). So time has to be taken into account inasmuch as processes carried out in different ways and at different lengths yield different results. This comprehension of the mechanisms of language permits the linguist to analyze apparently contradictory evidence and give satisfactory answers to many problems.

1.1.5 What's in a word?

Another important principle of Guillaumian linguistics is that it is not just sentences or phrases which are analyzable wholes, but words as well, one of the main postulates being that "in order for a word to appear in syntax, it must first be constructed" (Korrel 1991: 4). And that is why we need to understand the meaning of the different building blocks involved in their construction.

So the word, in Psychomechanics, is of prime importance as the main repository of meaning. This definition of the word is in accord with Sapir's (the ill-treated genius of American linguistics) who sees it as the smallest psychologically independent morsel of meaning:

> The best we can do is to say that the word is one of the smallest, completely satisfying bits of isolated "meaning" into which the sentence resolves itself. It cannot be cut into without a disturbance of meaning, one or the other or both of the severed parts remaining as a helpless waif on our hands. ...Such features as accent, cadence, and the treatment of consonants and vowels within the body of a word are often useful aids in the external demarcation of the word, but they must by no means be interpreted, as is sometimes done, as themselves responsible for its psychological reality (1921 [1949]: 35–36).

It should be borne in mind that even though the word is seen as an independent psychological reality — in Guillaumian linguistics that is — it is nevertheless constructed from non-independent parts. One could paraphrase Sapir's comment by saying that the word is the smallest independent, psychologically real, construct. We will return to the nature of the word when discussing HPSG.

1.1.6 The importance of real data

There is, in Psychomechanics, great importance put on real data. That is to say that instead of making up examples and discussing their grammaticality, the linguist goes

to real (corpus-based) examples and analyzes the sense of the form being studied *in context*. As Sells put it, in quite a different context I must add, "Given enough imagination and time, it is probable that most of the sequences of words deemed ungrammatical in this work could be found to be acceptable" (1985: 8). The idea is not to say why is x grammatical or not, but in which context and with what meaning or sense can x be uttered as grammatical.

A simple example. Any grammarian or linguist will tell you that with *how* one uses the bare infinitive and with *why*, the *to*-infinitive. That may be true — in about 99.44% of the time — but, an analysis of corpus data will show that it is not always the case, for example:

(1)   How tell her?

This cannot be a 'performance error' for it is repeated twice in the same page (and the proof-reader would have picked it up), and is written by a native speaker with quite a good grasp of the language (George Orwell, *Burmese Days*).[5] Nor is it a great puzzle: the speaker wanted to convey a specific thought different from what "How to tell her?" would have evoked. In this instance, the goal of the linguist is to find out what that difference is, where it comes from, hence what that left-out *to* stands for.[6]

I do not wish to suggest that there is no use, in Psychomechanics, for linguistic intuition, quite the contrary: intuition is at the root of the investigation into meaning. We start from our intuition based on what little we have observed, posit a hypothesis as to meaning and effect on a given structure, then confront the hypothesis to the corpus data and go back to step one for refinement of the idea.

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[5]Discarding such an example as an instance of performance error would amount to saying, as someone once did, that, in competence, planetary orbits are round, it's just in performance that they are elliptic.

[6]For a detail study of the infinitive with *wh*-words, I refer the reader to Enns (1994).

1.1.7 Incidence

As for the construction of phrases, a particular concept needs to be discussed, that of
incidence. The basic division, within 'notional' parts of speech, is between what has
internal incidence (the noun) and what has *external* incidence and within this group,
words with first degree incidence (the adjective, as well as the verb) and second
degree (the adverb). That is to say that the adjective differs from the noun in that
whereas the former refers to something outside itself (a noun) — external incidence
(of the first degree) — the latter is, so to speak, self-contained — internal incidence.
Adverbs refer to something which is <u>not</u> self-contained (adjectives, other adverbs or
even verbs, which require the support of *person*) — external incidence of the second
degree. Prepositions bridge two parts of a phrase. The relation thus established is
from an import of meaning (e.g. an adjective) and the support (e.g. a noun).[7]

When we say that one part of the utterance, the import (be it morpheme, word,
phrase or even sentence), is made incident to another, the support, we mean that its
meaning — the notional import — is brought to bear on the support which lies at
the heart of the specific structure involved (NP, VP, sentence, etc.). Since illustration
often helps to best explain something, here is a representation of the interplay of
incidences involved in uttering the phrase "The very lovely child" (fig. 1.1).
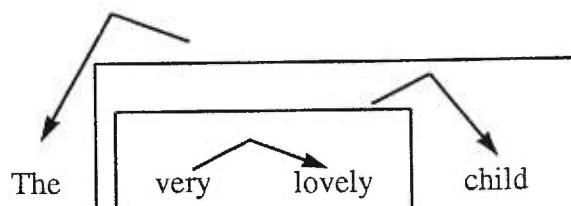
Figure 1.1: Interplay of incidence

Syntax, in Psychomechanics, stems from the interplay of incidences. Like words,

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[7]There is also the notion, fairly recent, of syntactic import and support, see below §1.2.2.

clauses can have internal incidence, as well as first and second degree external incidence (respectively, in noun clauses, relatives (adjectival clauses) and adverbial clauses). Within the sentence, the VP is supported by the subject NP, and in turn supports the direct object — and through the mediation of a preposition, any complement.

The relations between the various elements of the structure are, in Psychomechanics, pretty well defined within the viewpoint of iteration. This is not the case for X-bar, except to say — based for the most part on statistical inference — that something is the Spec of X, because it comes before it. There are in Psychomechanics no transformations, hence no D- or S-Structure, just the structure of the utterance and the underlying meaning. In HPSG, there is no movement of constituents either; what other theories see as movement is effected, for instance, in the representation of the head, as is the case for subject–auxiliary inversion: "By way of illustration, the noninverted auxiliary *can* of *Kim can go* would give rise, via this lexical rule, to the inverted *can* of *can Kim go*, as shown in (85)" (P&S 389) This is compatible with Psychomechanics, which by virtue of its general principles cannot accept movement of the sort proposed by Chomsky (e.g. move-α).

If, in an interrogative sentence, a word is not in its 'accustomed' position — *i.e.* in a supposed D-Structure — it does not play the same role as in others, there is a different incidencial interplay at work. If a *wh*-word is found at the beginning of a sentence, it is because it is conceived, in this particular sentence, (by the speaker and hopefully, as they decipher the utterance, the hearer) as the support of the sentence. Having no predetermined support, the pronoun referent is non-specified and so open, hence a question (or general statement, as in "Whoever does this, he will be punished.").[8]

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[8]In this context, the question of the HPSG trace (cf. P&S 159ff.) is not so difficult to answer. The way Psychomechanics could apply this concept (as it does solve a lot of syntactical problems) is to have the governing body (the constituent head 'governing' the trace) emit the SYNSEM|NONLOCAL|SLASH{[1]} feature when lacking the proper complement. If a constituent (often

1.1.8 Other items of note

A brief note on two subjects: UG and phonology. Contrary to HPSG, Psychomechanicists usually reject the idea of a Universal Grammar. Let me temper this view thus: it could be said that concerning UG, Psychomechanics adopts a point of view close to that of Mohanon (1993), concerning *fields of attraction.* The human language faculty is a self-organizing dynamical system. Within that system, many features of the human intellect interact with one another: perception, mechanisms of discrimination and generalization, etc., to give rise to patterns common to many languages. It isn't that there is an innate, hard-wired UG in the brain but that children all use the same intellectual faculties to acquire their language, and that these languages all have to be adapted to certain constants of human experience.

Since its beginnings, Psychomechanics has been concerned almost uniquely with the semantical parts of language and hence has had nothing to say about phonology, and neither does HPSG, "We will have nothing to say about the nature of PHON in this book" (P&S 15). But from the general principles of the theory of Psychomechanics, it is not hard to see that any phonological theory related to Psychomechanics would have to be declarative. It is not the habit of Guillaumian linguists to look favourably upon derivations, rule ordering and the like. It is precisely these features that Declarative Phonology — as presented, in various forms, in Goldsmith 1993 — aims at driving out of phonological representation.

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problems) is to have the governing body (the constituent head 'governing' the trace) emit the SYNSEM|NONLOCAL|SLASH{[1]} feature when lacking the proper complement. If a constituent (often a verb) demands (for semantical or syntactical reasons) a complement that is not there, a SLASH is introduced which goes up the structure until it finds a (semantically and syntactically) suitable host. There would be, from this point of view, no need for a separate phonologically empty sign.

It should be evident that there isn't any word or sign in Psychomechanics without a phonological realization, be it a trace or PRO (the Generativist's imaginary friend) contra HPSG (cf. the description of the trace, P&S 161, (10)).

1.2 HPSG

The first thing we should ask ourself is: to what extent can we expect the two theories, Psychomechanics and HPSG, to be united? how far are they compatible, given their respective points of view and object of research? how are their general principles common or mutually exclusive?

Although both Psychomechanics and HPSG take the word as one of their starting points, the two do not go the same way. For Psychomechanics, the study focuses on words and morphemes, and primarily on their meaning and *effets de sens*. The main object of study is the system behind words and morphemes. In HPSG, the "principal type of object with which our theory is concerned, of course, is the sign (...); and we assume that signs fall into two disjoint subtypes, *phrasal* signs (sort *phrase*) and *lexical* signs (sort *word*)" (P&S 31).

Take, for instance, the treatment of the verb system in the two theories. The way it behaves syntactically is the focus of HPSG, but "verb inflection, which we view as a lexical matter, is not accounted for within the syntax at all" (P&S 35) and so is not discussed in their presentation of the theory. This discussion is a part played by Psychomechanics: what system lies beneath the surface, behind the various verb forms, and what do these imply?

Although HPSG sometimes makes incursions within the realm of morphology (as in the case of the possessive *'s*) it is only as a way to expound certain situations or principles. Psychomechanics, on the other hand, has dabbled a bit in syntax — especially that of the noun phrase — in developing the implications of the concept of incidence (cf. Valin 1981). But these sorties have not gotten that far into the realm of the sentence, even though work on the position of the adjective within the NP (pre- or postposed) have yielded interesting results (cf. Bouchard, Wilmet).

There are then two areas where we have to look for compatibility: the word and

the immediate relationships (intra-phrase) between them. If the respective concepts of Psychomechanics and HPSG prove compatible, we will have to further establish a common metalanguage to work in.

We have seen — albeit in a limited way — how Psychomechanics views the word. What then is HPSG's view?

1.2.1 The Word

The word, in HPSG, is a particular sort of sign and as such has the following attributes: PHON, SYNSEM and QSTORE. The first one, the phonetical/phonological part of the word (the *signifiant*) is, as we have pointed out, not discussed within P&S, who focus instead on the other two: the syntactic and semantic value and the quantifier store. "The value of the SYNSEM attribute is another structured object, of a type that we will call a *synsem* object, with attributes of its own called LOCAL (LOC) and NONLOCAL (NONLOC) (...) LOC information in turn is divided into CATEGORY, CONTENT and CONTEXT attributes" (P&S 16).

Their attributes are, in turn, decomposed into others, giving an attribute-value matrix of this type seen in figure 1.2.

> Here the CATEGORY value includes not only what would be regarded by most syntacticians as the syntactic category of the word in question, but also the grammatical arguments it requires. The CONTENT value constitutes the word's contribution to (context-independent) aspects of the semantic interpretation of any phrase that contains it. And the CONTEXT value contains certain context-dependent linguistic information usually discussed under such rubrics as indexicality, presupposition, and/or conventional implicature (P&S 21-22).

But these features not only serve to define the word (or phrase), they are in fact responsible for their behaviour, in conjunction with certain principles. "As is evident

$$
\text{word}\begin{bmatrix} \text{PHON} & \langle she \rangle \\ \text{SYNSEM} & \text{synsem}\begin{bmatrix} \text{LOCAL} & \text{local}\begin{bmatrix} \text{CATEGORY} & \text{cat}\begin{bmatrix} \text{HEAD} & noun[\text{CASE} \quad nom] \\ \text{SUBCAT} & \langle \, \rangle \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{CONTENT} & \text{ppro}\begin{bmatrix} \text{INDEX} & \boxed{1}\;\text{ref}\begin{bmatrix} \text{PER} & 3rd \\ \text{NUM} & sing \\ \text{GEND} & fem \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{RESTR} & \{\,\} \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{CONTEXT} & \text{context}\begin{bmatrix} \text{BACKGR} & \left\{ \text{psoa}\begin{bmatrix} \text{RELN} & female \\ \text{INST} & \boxed{1} \end{bmatrix} \right\} \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix}
$$
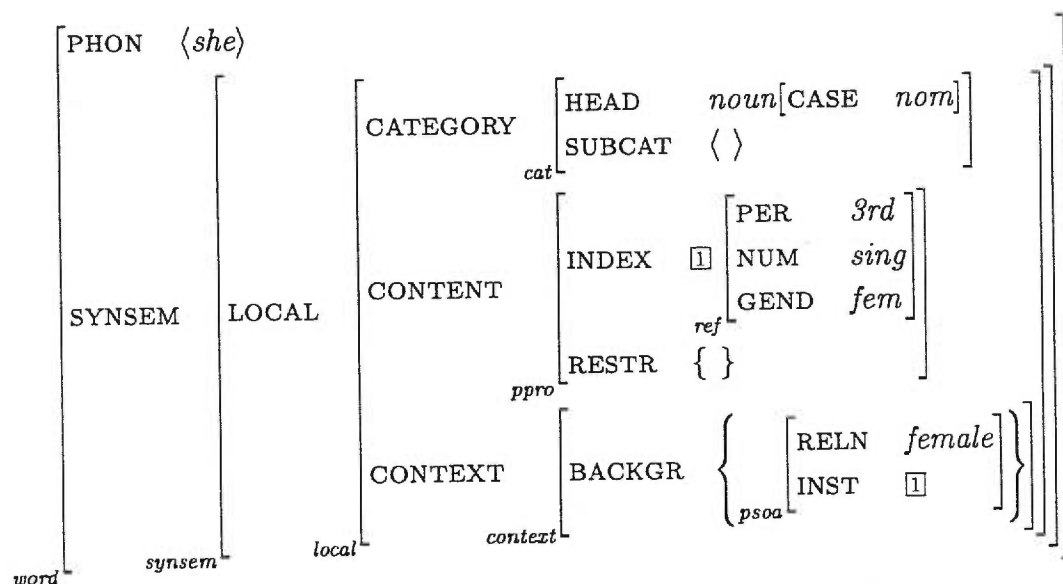
Figure 1.2: AVM for the pronoun *she* (P&S 20)

from this discussion, the theory of grammar presented here relies crucially on complex lexical information, which determines, in accordance with general principles such as the HFP and the Subcategorization Principle, the essential grammatical properties of phrasal expressions" (P&S 36).

Of special importance to us here is the *cat* portion of the word, where we find the features HEAD [CASE] and SUBCAT.

> The CATEGORY value is an object of the sort *category (cat)*, and it contains the two attributes HEAD and SUBCAT. Roughly speaking, the HEAD value of a sign is its part of speech, (...) The appropriate values for HEAD are divided into the two sorts *substantive (subs)* and *functional (funct)*. Subsorts of the sort *substantive* are *noun, verb, adjective* and *preposition*, whereas *determiner* and *marker* (e.g. complementizers) are the two subsorts of the sort *functional* that we will deal with here (P&S 23).

These features find their counterparts, of sorts, in the Guillaumian concepts of *plane* and *incidence*. Let us first consider the HPSG notion of HEAD. It tells us

in what kind of phrase one might find the word: noun, verb, preposition, etc., depending on the head of this phrase. The definition is mainly a matter of syntax. In Psychomechanics, the reverse point of view is taken, parts of speech being defined as a matter of semantics (and then syntax). There are two important divisions, the first one between *predicative* and *transpredicative* (or *nonpredicative*) parts of speech: the former comprising nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, the latter prepositions, conjunctions, etc. Basically this is the same division as in HPSG except for the preposition which in Psychomechanics is *transpredicative* and in HPSG, *substantive* instead of *functional*.

Within the *predicative* parts of speech occurs a further subdivision, along two planes of representation, time and space:

> Working from traditional ideas (...), Guillaume (cf. 1971, p. 144) proposes that
> a noun is a word which, besides signifying its lexical meaning (a person, thing,
> etc.), consignifies space, as opposed to a verb which, besides its signification,
> consignifies time. That is to say, from his point of view a noun has as its gram-
> matical meaning a formal (i.e. grammatical) representation of space, whereas
> a verb has a formal representation of time (Hirtle 1982: 82).

The feature CASE, found in HPSG with the CATEGORY [*noun*], is in Psychome-
chanics much less present. Historically, there were cases in English or French, but
with the notable exception of pronouns, case does not remain within the representa-
tion of the noun itself. It is not a matter of *tongue* but of *discourse*, hence it being
left out of the word's construal.

The SUBCAT attribute of the word refers, in Psychomechanical terms to both its
incidencial regimen and the complementational needs of the verb (or sometimes the
noun), usually called the subcategorization. Note that this latter is far less strong in
the Guillaumian perspective, as there is always a way in which the speaker can play
with the sense and the syntactic demands of the verb in order to create utterances

with a little more zest. For instance, in French, it is generally agreed that the verb *dormir* subcategorizes for a subject but no object. It is however possible to give it three arguments, as in:

(2)   Cette nuit, je te la dors.

where we find both a direct and an oblique object, and where the sense of *dors* is a little different than is usually the case.

1.2.2   Syntactic relations

We now come to how the relations between words, and between phrases, are conceived in these two theories. As we have said earlier, in HPSG the phrase is another instance of sign, and so has a matrix similar to that of a word. It can in addition be represented as a tree structure. What determines the structure of the phrase is the HEAD and SUBCAT values of the different components, and this, according to a number of principles, amongst them the HFP (the HEAD value of any headed phrase is structure-shared with that of the head daughter) and Subcategorization Principle:

> In a headed phrase (i.e. a phrasal sign whose DTRS value is of the sort *head-struc*), the SUBCAT value of the head daughter is the concatenation of the phrase's SUBCAT list with the list (in order of increasing obliqueness) of SYNSEM values of the complement daughters (P&S 34 (15)).

This second principle can also be understood in terms of *valence*. This principle is stated in the following manner: "In a headed phrase, for each valence feature F, the F value of the head daughter is the concatenation of the phrase's F value with the list of SYNSEM values of the F-DTRS value" (P&S 348). These 'valence features' are SUBJ (subject), COMPS (complements) and SPR (specifier). This leads to a lexical variation on X-bar (cf. P&S 362, (40)). Their description of this variation has a parallel in Psychomechanics, in what could be called an Iterativity Principle (IP). For Guillaume, language is

> a peripheral system consisting internally of repetitions of itself as far as the general form is concerned. My idea of tongue is therefore that of a system of systems, with this much being clear: the general, containing system and the less general, contained systems do not differ in their general form; their difference is one of substance or of limits (1984a: 8).

Language has to have the ability to represent the whole of our experience. On the other hand, it cannot be too complicated: it has to be learnable and must not use up "too much space" or too much time in its effection. So, as it is with the phonemic system, the rest of language needs a certain simplicity. The simplest way to arrive at this situation is to use iteration: the internal sub-systems repeat one another as to their general structure. And as Guillaume tells us, each part of a sub-system is representative, in some way, of the whole of the systemic process in question.

The main difference we can see here, between Psychomechanics and HPSG, is that, for one thing, the structure in Psychomechanics is less static: there is a notion of incidencial movement involved, which moreover aims at describing the construction phases of the phrase.

Agreement and binding

There is a further point of agreement between Psychomechanics and HPSG, and that is agreement. P&S argue for a syntactical and semantical basis for agreement. Agreement, they argue, occurs as two words are made to be "token-identical". That is to say that the link is between the INDEX attribute of one another: "the structures that are required to be token-indentical in agreement phenomena of this sort are not functional structures, but rather indices. The shape of the verb is constrained when the grammar requires structure sharing between the INDEX value of one expression and an index specified by some other expression" (P&S 60-1). That is why one can have apparent discrepancies like:

(3)   The waiter hurt herself

where the speaker wants to draw attention to the effeminate side of the waiter in question. The same treatment is given in Psychomechanics where words do not agree with one another but with the idea behind them (cf. Hirtle 1982).[9]

> the index of a nominal-object itself has internal structure, namely, the features PERSON, NUMBER and GENDER (informally, *agreement* features). It is token-identity (structure-sharing) of indices that corresponds in our theory to the notion of coindexing for NPs. The semantic import [not in the Psychomechanical sense] of indices is simply this: if an NP is referential, then any NP coindexed with it must have the same reference. Since the agreement features belong to the internal structure of indices, it follows immediately that coindexed NPs necessarily bear identical specification for person, number and gender (P&S 249).

The view HPSG offers of binding is also quite close to what Psychomechanics might have proposed (I know of no work, as yet, on the subject). That is to say that neither HPSG nor Psychomechanics would consider binding to be a matter of structure. P&S reject the GB theory of binding as it creates too many problems and does not account for some peculiar linguistic phenomena, *i.e.* it either predicts as grammatical ungrammatical sentences, or, *vice versa*, refuses well-formed ones (cf. P&S 243ff.).

The 'Nonconfigurational Binding Theory' they offer calls for what they term *obliqueness command (o-command)* based on the degree of obliqueness of different words (determined by their role *vis-à-vis* the verb, or noun, acting as head). This *o-command* is stated thus: "Let Y and Z be *synsem* objects with distinct LOCAL values, Y referential. Then Y *locally o-commands* Z just in case Y is less oblique than Z" (P&S 253 (37)). The HPSG Binding Theory is divided into three principles (P&S

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[9]There is a psychological support for this point of view in that it has been observe that we quickly forget words but retain the meaning of the utterance, hence enabling long distance anaphora.

254 (40)): A: a locally o-commanded anaphor must be locally o-bound; B: a personal pronoun must be locally o-free; C: a nonpronoun must be o-free.

It is easy to see how, combined with incidencial factors, this could be transposed without much difficulty in Psychomechanics as the degree of obliqueness is directly related to the regimen of incidence. If a constituent is made incident to another *via* a certain preposition, the interplay of incidence will be more complex, hence the relation with obliqueness.

Specifiers

One possibly marked difference between the two theories is in the treatment of specifiers.[10] Psychomechanics does not consider a specifier 'class' in either the NP or the VP. In its treatment of the phrase — as presented above — the words at the left of the head are the semantic import (SEMIMP: adjective, adverb) or the syntactic support (SYNTSUPP: auxiliary or determiner). They are not grouped together but behave in very different ways with regard to the head. The SEMIMP adds meaning to it whereas the SYNTSUPP closes the process, offering a formal limit to the rest of the phrase.

Not so in HPSG. P&S present the problem of specifiers by showing how it cannot be subject or head. But their analysis is based on the (reasonable) assumption that there can only be one head or subject per phrase. But since phrases are often imbedded within other phrases, it can happen that there are two (so-called) subjects, at two different levels. On the other hand, if we conceive of two types of head: semantical and syntactical, we can furthermore define the subject as the syntactic head: the part which syntactically supports the whole of the phrase, including its semantic head or support.

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[10]Another difference is found with quantifiers. However, since both theories discuss at length the notion of quantification (Psychomechanics with its *tenseur binaire*, HPSG with its QSTORE) and much would have to be said, I will, for now, leave the matter untouched.

In the interplay of incidence, what comes before the (semantic) head of a phrase is not necessarily the subject: in a phrase like "lovely cats," there is no subject (no determiners). Here, *lovely* is made incident to *cats*, forming the construct *lovely cats* which is not, in turn, made incident to any syntactic support, hence producing an 'open' (more general) phrase.

In this way are (some) Specs subjects (and heads). In HPSG, we see that Specs share some characteristics with what they call 'markers'. In Psychomechanics also, do SYNTSUPP share such features for they are, like prepositions or conjunctions (complementizers), active on a more formal level than predicative parts of speech. They determine, modify or specify the abstract form of the phrases, like the determiner may (en)close a noun phrase.

1.3 The verb system of English

This small introduction to the principles of Psychomechanics could not be complete without addressing its views on the system of the verb in English. The verb, in most IE languages, contains five formative elements: *voice, aspect, tense, mood* and *person*. We will briefly present what is implied in three of them, namely tense, mood and aspect. It has to be understood that, in Psychomechanics, these features are not accidental but directly linked to the verb system of the language.

1.3.1 Time and time again

First of all, we must understand that, as has been stated, verbs are beings of time; but what kind of time? There are, basically, two types: universe time and event time. Universe time is the representation of the time in which the action or state, expressed by the lexical side of the verb, takes place. It is the referential, external time. Such a time-frame has to be conceived before being used, and that is the aim of the construction of mood (a.k.a., in psychomechanical terms, *chronogenesis*, the

creation of time), see below, §1.3.3.

Event time is the internal time of the action or state expressed by the verb. As a general word to describe either states or actions (or state-like and action-like affairs), we will use the term *event*. The difference between what are generally known as states and actions is in the internal representation of the event. We recognize two types of event: *monophase* (state) and *metaphase* (action).[11] Monophase events are those in which every instant of the event, its *phases*, are alike (with regard to lexical meaning) so that if there is a change the event as such is over. It can be compared to water: for all intents and purposes, every drop is the same; if suddenly you come upon a drop that is not water but tequila, you don't have the same event anymore.

The metaphase event has phases differing from one to the other, as in "I sang a song" where each part is different from the following and the preceding. In "He resembled his father" any part of the event is the same, hence a monophase event.[12] Furthermore, in the case of metaphase events, event time defines the value of completion of the event: whether it is viewed as complete or not.

1.3.2   Tense

Tense is the placing of an event within (a previously defined) universe time, with regard to a reference point. In English, there are two tenses (and not, as some would have it, twenty six): a past and a non-past (or transpast) including both the present and the future. Time, the reader will recall from §1.1.3, here can also be understood either in a spatial way or as logical antecedence.

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[11]cf. Langacker *perfective/imperfective* opposition (1987: 72).

[12]It will be noted that sentences such as "I walk to work everyday" are considered monophase.

1.3.3 Mood

Early on in his work, Guillaume introduced a conception of mood which takes into consideration the fact that in order to place an event within time, both the event and the time it will be in must first be conceptualized. According to him, this conceptualization of time befalls to the system of mood. The idea behind the system of mood is what Guillaume called chronogenesis, the construction of time: an etapist institution of universe time involving three steps, for the three moods of French (*quasi-nominal*, subjunctive and indicative). In the first step, giving us the quasi-nominal mood, time is represented as a flow from the unactualized to the already actualized, passing through a phase of actualization.

Hence three forms: the infinitive represents an event that has yet to reach the point where it begins to come into actuality. This form is all-virtual and all-prospective.[13] The second form, the present participle, is the event in its coming-to-be, part of it is actualized, over with, part of it still left to be. The last form is the past participle, where the event is all spent. "This image of universe time arises from the need to represent that progressive mobility, that kinetic impulse which is a necessary element in any verb image" (Hirtle 1975: 17).[14] Subsequent work by Hirtle, Hewson and Duffley gave us a similar view of the English mood system, with a few notable differences (cf. Duffley 1992a: 141). This is how one could represent the quasi-nominal mood of English (fig. 1.3). Mind you, there is no fixed point in time represented here, only the flux of time. Nor has the event yet been supported by *person*.

The second step of the chronogenesis (or second *chronothesis*) yields the subjunctive mood in which the event is related to personal support but time has not yet been made fully 'temporal', it is still more conceptual. The event is not yet distinct

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[13]We will discuss it much more fully in Chapter 4.

[14]This mood takes its name from the fact that it holds the forms of the verb which are closest, in meaning and in use, to the nominal parts of speech, *i.e.* the substantive and the adjective (the infinitive is substantival, the past participle adjectival and the present participle either, depending on its discursive use.
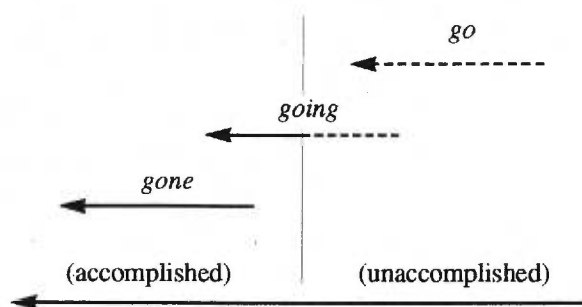
Figure 1.3: The quasi-nominal mood

from universe time. Two parts can nevertheless be recognized, one prospective, one retrospective (fig. 1.4).
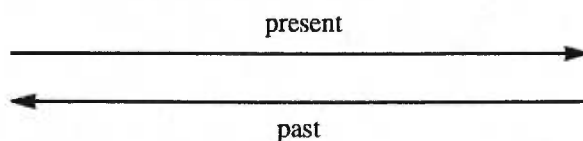
Figure 1.4: The subjunctive mood

The last chronothetical step finishes the job and gives a fully defined universe time with both temporal and personal support, the indicative (fig. 1.5).
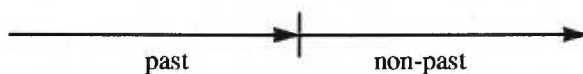
Figure 1.5: The indicative mood

As for the imperative, we have already seen (§1.1.1) that it is a means of expressivity, hence a mood of discourse, not of tongue. In French, it uses the semiology of the indicative or, for modal verbs, of the subjunctive. In English, it is difficult to say which mood is involved, probably the indicative for most verbs — except, of course,

for *be* which seems to be of the subjunctive.[15]

1.3.4   Aspect

In this theoretical context, the past participle is the quasi-nominal form the event of which is all-actualized; it expresses the idea of an event as already over. Time has run out in this form which means that the participle requires a subterfuge to be used as a verb (otherwise it is more adjectival). For instance, in

(4)   It has snowed

we place on the time line an event that is already realized (the participle *snowed*), *i.e.* something the duration of which is over. In order to place the event in time, an auxiliary verb has to be used. According to Hirtle (1965) and other Psychomechanical studies, an auxiliary is a verb which has a duration with virtually no content, *i.e.* a verb whose lexical meaning has been dematerialized. The only thing left in *has* as an AUX is the idea of being beyond an event, of a result. But this event is not denoted by the auxiliary verb; it thus needs a past participle to fill this lexical void. The auxiliary places the participle in time and space and in so doing places the subject in the aftermath of the event, rather than directly within the latter (fig. 1.6).
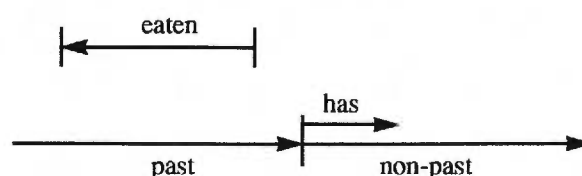
Figure 1.6: Participle/auxiliary relationship

Brinton (1988: 248, note 10) objects to this meaning when it comes to uses like "I've known him since I was a young man" where, as Hirtle says (1975: 102), the

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[15]As for the French *conditionnel*, it is not a mood but a tense. In fact, its semiology and meaning indicate a similar relationship between it and the future tense, as there is between the *imparfait* and the simple past.

subject is situated "after some portion of the event's duration." This, however, occurs (in the simple perfect) when monophase events are involved. There, if the subject is situated after any of the event's instants, he can be considered to be after the event, since all instants are effectively identical and contain the whole of the event's coming-to-be, and so a monophase event cannot be seen as incomplete.

The hypothesis proposed by Hirtle has some advantages compared to other views. It postulates a single underlying meaning that can account for all of the uses of this form, and takes into account its two elements (the auxiliary and the past participle), incorporating them within a general description of the verb system. The participle is analyzed as a form evoking its event as accomplished, obtained in the first step of chronogenesis — the construction of a representation of time — *i.e.* the quasi-nominal mood (see *supra*, fig. 1.4). This quasi-nominal form is made incident to the auxiliary, hence placing the subject in the result phase of the event.

But how does the auxiliary place the subject after the event? Hirtle (1965: 26) observes that the vocation to auxiliaryhood "depends on the lexical content of the verb, or rather the degree to which this lexical content is felt to condition that of other verbs." For instance, many more events are dependent on existence (*to be*) than on skiing (*to ski*). Hirtle adds that "verbs expressing possession, becoming, capacity, obligation and so on all have a natural attraction towards auxiliary status because, along with the verb *to be* in evoking the conditions of the ordinary event, they are felt to be, of all verbs, the most virtual."

The way in which some verbs become auxiliaries is through a loss of lexical matter, a dematerialization which leaves them with a highly general form. "Their dematerialization has been carried to the extreme for a word. What remains to prevent their dissolution as independent words, what serves as a material content is a grammatical or formal element" (Hirtle 1965: 434). For *have*, it is the exploitation of the resultative implications of its meaning (*having* being the result of *getting*) which plays a

part in the impression of the subject being in the result phase of the event.

1.3.5 Reichenbach

A quick note, before going to other things, to sketch out a comparison of this system with Reichenbach's.[16]

In Reichenbach's theory, there are three parameters along which is defined the temporality of a verb form (whether tense or aspect) and one constant, the time of speech (S). The parameters are E, the point of the event; R, the point of reference and P, the point of temporal deixis. In most main clauses not involving a historical present, we can assume that S = P.

There are, for these parameters, some default settings:

> Temporal relations are defined by the relations of immediate precedence (A—B, read "A immediately precedes B") and temporal inclusion (A ⊆ B, read "A is included in B"). The default temporal relations for verbs unmarked for tense and aspect are the following inclusion relations:
>
> ...
>
> A finite verb not marked for tense will thus be assigned a present tense reading. Morphologically marked tenses and aspects function to defeat these defaults (Kiparsky 1998: 11).

Graphically, we can represent the indicative verb forms of English in as in fig. 1.7.

Simply put, a comparison with Psychomechanics would tell that P is the point in time, the separator of tenses along the universe time defined through the chronogenesis. E is the point where the event is placed. R, on the other hand, indicates where the subject of the event is located with regard to it (during, before or after) and to

---

[16]For a more complete overview of the Reichenbachian system, I direct the attention of the reader the a recent article by Kiparsky (1998) which so elegantly presents the theory.

a. Past: E   b. Present Perfect: P
       | |
   R —— P   E —— R
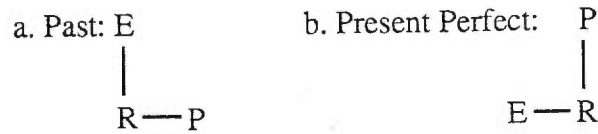
Figure 1.7: Verb forms (Reichenbachian)

and to universe time. The relation between E and R (or where the subject is *vis-à-vis* the event) determines which aspect is involved. The place of E with regard to P (or where the event is located in universe time) tells which tense is used.

Conclusion

There is much to be done before we could arrive — if ever — at a complete unification of the Psychomechanics of language and HPSG into what I have named an *Incidencial Phrase Structure Grammar* (or IPSG), a linguistic theory encompassing the findings and intuitions of both. But what has been presented here points to many areas where such a union is easily attained, a few points of contentions easily overcome and some bridges more difficult to build. All in all, the goal of an IPSG is not so far fetched as would at first seem.

We could imagine that, formally, it could look like this: first we would need the word described through an AVM like the following (fig. 1.8).

$$
\left[\text{CATEGORY} \begin{bmatrix} \text{PLANE} & \textit{time, space} \\ \text{INCIDENCE} & \textit{int, ext1, ext2} \\ \text{SUBCAT} & \end{bmatrix}\right]
$$

Figure 1.8: Partial IPSG matrix

After that, items like the HPSG *trace* or PRO would have to be done away with,

as would the Psychomechanical shyness towards formalism. *O-command* would have to be restated and the tree representations of the phrase adjusted to take into account such concepts as incidence and (syntactic and semantic) supports and imports. And so on and so forth. It would be very interesting to see such a fusion developed and used, to finally close the gap existing between Guillaumian linguistics and more mainstream theories.

As for the more specific view of the English verb system, Hirtle's hypothesis has also been built upon by subsequent research. Using Psychomechanics and the groundwork done by Hirtle, Korrel, as we will see in the next chapter, has been able to reduce all three differences observed between Dutch and English uses of the present perfect (*vs* the simple present and past) to only one causal factor, the conceptualization of the instant of duration. It is important to have the factor yielding these differences identified, for, as preliminary evidence seems to indicate, a similar distinction in use could very well exist between Modern English and earlier periods of the language. We must also remember that the same treatment has been undertaken by Tessier (1989 and personal communication) concerning the situation of modern German, yielding results similar to Korrel's.

Chapter 2

The Korrel shift

Introduction

Concerning the differences of usage observable between English and Dutch with regard to their respective perfect periphrasis, much has been written, but — and one may wonder why — not as regards the historical facets of the problem. Lia Korrel, in her monograph (1991) and subsequent article (1993) discussed the synchronic difference between these two forms in a successful attempt to account for this discrepancy through a unique cause (namely, as we will see later, a different representation of the 'moment of duration'). Having established that cause, it remained to be seen, from a diachronic point of view, where it hailed from. If there is such a fundamental difference between English and its "sister" languages (Dutch as well as German), it must be that at least one of these two sides has changed through the years. As the view of the historical change in the verb system of English presented here is dependent on the hypothesis put forward by Korrel, we will first have a look at this hypothesis, after which we will examine the reasons for postulating the existence of a shift in the representation of the "moment of duration" during the ME period, and look at the relevant data to pinpoint the moment of the change, which we shall refer to as the *Korrel shift.*

2.1 The Korrel hypothesis

It is well known that the use of the English present perfect differs in many ways from its Dutch counterpart. A first difference, often noted and sometimes studied, deals with "duration so far": the expression of an event begun in the past and extending up to the present. Whereas in English the present perfect is compulsory in this case, Dutch uses the simple present (the examples come from Korrel 1993):

(1) a) He *has been* in hospital since Monday.

     b) ?He is in (the) hospital since Monday

     c) *He lies in the hospital since Monday

(2) Hij *ligt* sinds maandag in het ziekenhuis.

A second difference, noted and described by McCoard (1978), concerns usage with past adverbials: the English perfect cannot be used with adverbs of (precise) past location. This is not so in Dutch:

(3) a) I *went* to the movies yesterday.

     b)*I have gone to the movies yesterday

(4) Ik *ben* gisteren naar de bioscoop *gegaan*.

The third difference has to do with the notion of "present relevance"[1]. This notion does not seem to be construed in the same manner in Dutch as in English. Dutch seems far freer in this respect:

(5) She *fell* off her bicycle.

(6) Zij *is gevallen* met haar fiets.

In English, the falling off is not construed as relevant in this example, whereas in Dutch it obviously is. There are often parallels between the two languages, however:

(7) Jans! The jar with beads *has fallen* from the stairs. Could you help

     me pick them up?

---

[1]The notion of present relevance has been often discussed and, as it is only indirectly related to the purpose of this thesis, I will not go into it in details but direct the readers to the references given.

(8)   Jans! De pot met kralen *is* van de trap *gevallen*. Kun je even helpen
      met opruimen?

These differences (especially the first two) have been discussed by some gram-
marians (Zandvoort 1969: 77-80, Erades & Kruisinga 1953: 230, Kirsner 1977: 40-1)
but, as Korrel remarks, their discussions are not very helpful. According to Kirsner,
the first difference is "the result of a conventionalized reduction of equally suitable
alternatives" (1993: 3).

> Kirsner goes on to say that the motivation for choosing one form or the other
> is 'difficult to trace' and 'less informative', as language has made 'an arbitrary
> choice' here. ...The second difference Kirsner accounts for by assigning different
> meanings to the Dutch and the English present perfect, *non-past, before* and
> *past indefinite*. But the 'past' and the 'indefinite' in the latter designation are
> open to criticism. The morphology of the auxiliary clearly identifies the present
> perfect as a non-past tense (Korrel 1991: 32)

Korrel's solution to the problem of explaining these differences is based, as we have
said, on the groundwork laid out by the Psychomechanics of language. Her hypothesis
deals with the nature of the moment of duration and how it is unconsciously conceived
in Dutch and in English. This instant is the shortest possible stretch of duration,
where "it is no longer possible to separate already realized duration from duration yet
to come; the two impressions appear to be superposed" (1993: 12). She compares it
with the jump second hand of a watch: "similarly for the grammatical representation
of the present instant of duration. We can visualize the subject as being poised to
move ahead and realize another instant of duration or as having (...) just realized
this instant" (1993: 14).

Korrel hypothesizes that, given the differences of use between (1) and (2), a differ-
ent conception of the event is used in Dutch and in English. English chooses to view
the instant as 'already actualized', the latter the view of it as 'yet to be actualized'.

> The use of the simple present in Dutch indicates that the speaker represents the moment of duration coinciding with his consciousness as just one more in the event and so it is, from its place in time, basically the same as all other ones realized. (...) If the meaning postulated for the present perfect, namely that of indicating a stretch of time beginning immediately beyond the lexical event, is valid, then English represents the present instant of duration as arising after the string of already realized instants of the event. From this one can deduce that English has chosen to represent the present instant as still to unfold in time, as the *starting point* of what comes after (ibid.: 14-5).

So, if English conceives of the present instant of duration as "arising after the string of already realized instants of the event," it cannot use a simple present form to express the event in (1). This representation of an instant of event time coinciding with the present instant is given, in the following example from Dutch, by its auxiliary with which the speaker expresses a momentary situation of the subject. This accounts also for the second difference:

(9) Good grief! What a mess! I *cleaned* and *vacuumed* everything only yesterday. And now look at it.

(10) Lieve help! Wat een troep! Gisteren *heb* ik de boel nog helemaal *opgeruimd* en *gestofzuigd*. En moet je nu eens zien.

In sentences like these,

> adverbs like *yesterday* or *gisteren* ...evoke a stretch of time before the moment of consciousness in which the event took place. This necessarily implies that the first part of its aftermath phase, arising immediately after the event, is already actualized as well, since *yesterday* not only indicates the stretch of time during which the notional events took place, but also where their aftermath phases began. Because English situates in the first instant of the Transpast the next instant of event time to be actualized, it would have to represent the preceding portion of the aftermath phase as though it were left behind. (1993: 19-20)

This also explains the different conception of present relevance: since the present instant of duration, as represented by the auxiliary, is seen in Dutch as already actualized, some events can be seen as relevant in Dutch, when in English they cannot. German, Korrel notes (1991: 122-3), seems to exhibit the same conception of the instant as Dutch. This hypothesis concerning German has been explored and supported by Tessier (1989).

And so we have in English a "moment of duration" which could be represented as in figure 2.1 and which has the effect of giving the English present a more futuristic feel, as it were. This is evident in the way that English speakers use the simple present, simple past and the present perfect, in comparison, of course, to Dutch. The Dutch moment of duration could be represented as in figure 2.2, which accounts for a representation of the present similar to the English present perfect.

Figure 2.1: English moment of duration
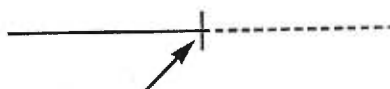
Figure 2.2: Dutch moment of duration

2.2 The historical change

English and Dutch being historically related, we must consider that there was a time when both had the same representation of the instant of duration; if so, a change in this representation has, in all probability, occurred in at least one of the two

two languages. Since English seems to show more particular evolutions regarding its verb system, it is very likely (although not obligatory) that it was the one to undergo a change in its representation of the moment of duration. If this change in English grammar occurred in the course of its (written) history, it would have left a trace: a transformation would be observable between usage in Old English (OE) and in Modern English (MnE).

2.2.1   General features

In Old and Middle English the perfect[2] had many characteristics it no longer exhibits, for instance an alternation between two auxiliaries. OE, like many modern Germanic languages, used 'be' (*beon/wesan*) as an auxiliary for the perfect. "Earlier in the [Modern English] period, however, *is* and *was* could still be used where the perfect participle had clear verbal form" (Curme 1931: 359).

> With intransitive verbs, *have* as an auxiliary competes with *be* (*sein, være, être,* etc.). English has never gone so far as some other languages in the use of *be* and has always said *he has been, he has stood* ...In MnE *have* is used to a greater extent than in any of the cognate languages and may now be said to be the regular auxiliary with all verbs (Jespersen 1940: 30).

Be auxiliary was used solely with intransitive verbs and occurred throughout the ME period, up until early MnE although, by that time, it was fairly rare. The only contemporary occurrences are archaic (a good example of this is the ample use of it by some of the characters in Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*); this archaic feeling seems to have long been present, as is illustrated when Visser talks of "attacks on the resultative form by some prominent 18th and 19th-century grammarians" (1973: §1898). The decline of this construction seems to have already started in the beginning of the ME

---

[2]I use this term to lighten the text and make it more readily readable. I do not wish to suggest that this means I consider the form to be the same as today. For other terms see the discussions in Mitchell and Visser on the subject.

period: "This old order of things continued throughout the OE period and into the ME period, but in ME there began to appear alongside the forms with *is* and *was* forms with *has* and *had* wherever the perfect participle had clear verbal force" (Curme 1931: 359; see also Rydén 1991 on the subject). This evolution can be noticed when one compares diverse texts — or manuscripts of the same text — of the ME period: "*Be* in the older (A) text of Laȝamon's *Brut* is repeatedly replaced by *have* in the younger (B) text" (Visser 1973: §1898, footnote).

There is a general consensus on the reasons behind this decline, namely the growing load on the auxiliary *be*: "It is perhaps not without significance that while *be* is becoming an auxiliary *par excellence* of the passive voice, it is losing ground as an auxiliary of the perfect and pluperfect tenses" (Mustanoja 1960: 501); "Another factor in the disappearance of *beon/wesan* and *weorthan* is, of course, their use with the passive" (Mitchell 1985: §735). Mitchell even questions its function as an auxiliary of the perfect "...if they ever were truly auxiliaries..." (§734). The problem with this explanation is that such a decline is only evident in English (although it can be said to have started in spoken French); other languages have kept *be* (*être*, *sein*, etc.) for both the passive and the perfect. Some grammarians (e.g. Mustanoja 1960: 501) attribute this decline to the use of *be* not only for the passive but also for the progressive. This, however, does not fit the historical development: the perfect formation with *be* had gone through a great deal of its decline before the progressive was instituted in English.[3]

A third auxiliary *Weorðan*.[4] did not have as long a life as *be*, its use having already been reduced to near-oblivion in OE: "weorðan + intransitive occurs in OE and early

---

[3] "An interesting parallel to the development of the perfect in Romance and Germanic is provided by the development of the *ima* 'have' perfect replacing the inherited *sum* perfect in Macedonian since the seventeenth century (see Friedman 1976). The *ima* perfect was originally adjectival and occurred only with transitive verbs. The change from stative to perfect was effected by the loss of case endings on the participles and extension of the construction to intransitive verbs" (Brinton 1988: 265, note 6).

[4] "Denum eallum *wearð* æfter ðam wælræse willa *gelumpen*." (*Beowulf*, 823), "Gien þe sunu *weorðeð*, bearn of byrde þurh gebyrd *cumen*..." (*Genesis*, 2197).

ME, but less than with transitive verbs. It still occurs in Dutch (*es werd gedanst*) and German (*es wurde getanzt*)" (Visser 1973: §1897). Visser has an extensive list of verbs where auxiliaries other than *habban* are used, which shows that *weorthan* was never much used. One could surmise that it might have been because it did not have stative meaning like *have* and *be* do; it is similar, in some way, to the use of *get* in Modern English so-called passive constructions in that it represents, in a way, the event in its coming into being, especially the end of it.

It has been said above that the past participle was sometimes inflected for gender and number (and sometimes case) when used with *habban* (more often with *beon*). No conclusive evidence or correlation exists however to tell us when, and why, it agreed with the object. Mitchell's discussion of the different word orders of the auxiliary, past participle and object with regard to inflection (amongst other things) does not give much insight into the phenomenon, although he says that "the position of the second [past] participle in relation to the verb and to the direct object (when it occurs) (...) is important for a consideration of the function of these periphrases in OE and for their subsequent history" (Mitchell 1985: §703). Other historians of the language have tackled this problem, also unsatisfactorily: "this difference of word order [between S-AUX-O-PP and S-AUX-PP-O] was without this discriminating force" (1985: §805). "After about Shakespeare's time the pattern with post-position of the object gradually became the normal one" says Visser (1973: §2001) adding that due to the confusion there had to be a choice. This, however, poses the problem of the state of other Germanic languages, for instance German, where the participle does not precede the object, but must be put at the end of the sentence. But from what Mitchell gathered from these observations, it seems reasonable to venture, as a tentative solution, that in the case of the perfect construction (*i.e.* except when the subject is felt to possess the object, which has been shown to be a rarity) the situation of the perfect in OE is somewhat similar to modern colloquial French. A lack of inflection is usual in spoken French, as in the written records of OE, and the rules where it should, according to

grammar books, agree with the object are not followed in practice in many cases. In OE, the decline of the inflection would indicate that the participle is not in relation to the direct object, but to something which has no gender, number or case. This would mean that it has a verbal or adverbial function.

2.2.2 Usage in earlier periods of English

Many distinctions exist between OE usage and that of MnE — which is why it is hard to agree on the existence of a perfect in OE. For one thing it is clear, and has often been pointed out in historical grammars, that the preterite was a mighty competitor of the perfect: "in OE, where the preterite tense carries out the functions of the modern preterite, perfect and pluperfect, past participles frequently occur as predicate adjuncts after *wesan/beon* and *habban*" (Mustanoja 1960: 499). "The simple past often stands for the not-yet-developed perfect in both principal and subordinate clauses" (Mitchell 1985: §634). "The well-known overlap between the past tense and the periphrasis is attested by their use in parallel or connected sentences ..." (Id. §723). For instance

(11) a. For hwylcum oðrum woldes þu þe sprecan buton for ðæm þe þu nu *sædes*? (*Boethius* 118.29)

"For which other would thou speak but for that which thou said."

b. Genog ic þe *hæbbe* nu *gereaht*, (id. 74.16)

"Enough I have now heard of thee"

(12) a. þin geleafa ðe *gehælde* (*ÆCHom* i.158.32)

"Thy belief held thee."

b. þin geleafa *hæfð* ðe *gehæled*, (*ÆCHom* i.152.23)

"Thy belief has held thee."

There is also sometimes co-occurrence of the two verb forms within the same sentence (see Visser 1973: §805). This, for many medievalists, indicates that the perfect was not well established in OE, if at all. There are many examples from later

periods, on the other hand, where a perfect is used where today one would use the preterite. Some grammarians therefore conclude that these two verb forms were in some sort of 'free variation': according to Visser "...special forms of the verb-base as time- or tense- markers are theoretically superfluous" because of the context (1973: §762). Here too, as with the use of *be* auxiliary, we can see parallels from different manuscripts of the same text, or various translations of the same source.[5]

> That in early MnE the now prevailing system of discriminating between the preterite and the [present perfect] was gradually developing might be concluded from a comparison of the following passages [see later § 2.3.3, Wyclif's and Tyndale's translations of the Bible.] It is only after the time of Shakespeare that the preterite and the [present perfect] are used as they are used nowadays(1973: §801).

Visser explains part of the variation in use as being due to literary considerations; he talks of co-occurrence (rare in OE, being found mostly in poetry) of past and present tenses, due to rhyme and metre. "Occasionally, a cluster consisting of an auxiliary in the present tense and a past participle is substituted for the non-rhyming preterite" (1973: §766). This also happens because of metre (1973: §772).

During the earlier periods of English, the perfect was not only competing with the preterite, but also with the present, for example, in 'þat folc gan to spelien Irlondes speche And aver seoððen þa lazen wunieða þan londe' [That people began to speak the tongue of Ireland and ever since live there] (*Laȝamon Brut* 10070). "In the course of the 19th century, however, the [present perfect] gradually begins to predominate" (Visser 1973: §792). There are numerous instances where the present was used when Modern English speakers would choose a perfect. Valuable examples of such usage are given in Visser (1973: §792-3) and will be examined below (section 2.3.2).

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[5]There is, however, a danger in using translations in a historical study of verb forms. It is not rare that the translator will be influenced by the original phraseology when writing the translation. This is furthermore complicated in religious writs, especially the Bible, by the traditional use of archaisms in such translations.

A third difference is the use of the perfect with adjuncts of time which are now incompatible with the present perfect: "The presence in utterances of adjuncts indicating past time did not prevent the [present perfect] from being used" (Visser 1973: §801). (The reader will note that Visser gives no examples from the 16th century onward.) "...the perfect, for instance, may occur in conjunction with adverbs of past time..." (Mustanoja 1960:504). Mitchell's comment (1985: §622) that "the adverb *ær* is occasionally used with the present tense to indicate what is strictly the future perfect relationship" can also apply, even in his examples, to the present perfect, as when one says "ere he has gone":

(13)   Uið ælcum attre redic 7 clate ete *ær* ne mæg þe nan man attre awyrdan
       (*Lch* ii, 110.9)

       "each ate poison radish and burr before any poison can (could) spoil
       them"

Some grammarians have speculated that this use of now-forbidden adverbs could be due to a shift in the meaning of these adjuncts: "Some adverbs that are nowadays limited to +THEN or -THEN were not fixed in Chaucer's time, for instance, *just now* or *since*. Others were constrained in that period, but have since become variable, e.g. *never*" (MᶜCoard 1978: 237).

These differences bring us back to those existing at present between Dutch and English, which were treated by Korrel (1991). The three characteristics of Dutch which she has analyzed are all, it seems, to be found in earlier periods of English. This is not however sufficient proof to conclude that there *was* a transformation of some sort in the representation of the event. The analysis of this evidence remains to be done from the point of view of the hypothesis she has put forward. Furthermore, it still leaves the question of when, and under what conditions this *shift* would have occurred.

2.3 Historical data

Many historical texts do not include the necessary context for the use of the present perfect, which was (and still is in some circles) used more often in conversation than in narration, as pointed out by Korrell who explains that she looked for "sources that contain many conversations, the most likely occasion to use present perfects..." (1991: 7). This makes it more difficult to trace the evolution of the form and to extrapolate — given the limited tokens — its meaning in each sub-period. I have therefore picked out texts from the diverse periods of the English language most likely to include reported speech or direct 'conversations':[6]

> Trnka (p.159) observes that 'in the Anglo-Saxon poetry the periphrastic perfect is almost exclusively found in direct speech'. If by this is meant that combinations of a present tense of *habban* and a second participle are almost exclusively found within inverted commas in modern editions, the figures of *Beowulf* support the statement: 13/15 (Mitchell 1985: § 703, footnote).

Sermons and homilies (e.g. *Ælfric's Homilies*) often 'talk' directly to their audience — although they tend to incorporate a great deal of biblical history or lives of saints — as do opinion texts, testimonies (e.g. that of William Thorpe) and writings on one's life (e.g. *Poema Morale*) and also letters (e.g. *The Cely Letters*). Riddles also make extensive use of the present, but their range is often limited to the stating of facts. Epic tales contain their share of reported speech (e.g. *Beowulf, Brut*). This latter text, together with some others (e.g. the *Cursor Mundi*), presents another characteristic that may come to be of interest: different manuscripts exist in different periods and dialects and the most recent one presents what may be features of interest in this historical study.

A good number of the Old and Middle English texts which have survived from this period are translations or adaptations of Latin or French texts, especially from

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[6]The narrative or 'historical' present does not seem to have made its appearance in English before the 14th century.

Christian-oriented originals like the Bible, *Beothius*, etc. These have been set aside whenever possible since they may contain 'contaminations' from their source-texts. These calques may present false evidence concerning the use of some forms and thus induce us into error. Nevertheless, I do not discard all of them off-hand as some may come to be useful later on.

In these selected texts, I have looked, amongst other things, for parallel uses of the perfect and the preterite: uses within the same sentence, in connected sentences and sometimes in different manuscripts of the same text. This serves as a basis for the examination of the situation of earlier English with regard to Korrel's second and third differences. Uses of the present perfect with time adjuncts will also be studied (Korrel's second difference).

As concerns the simple present, I have looked at uses with OE *siðð an* and ME *seoðð an*, 'since' as well as with time clauses like those now introduced by 'for,' e.g. *Efne min wif is for manigum wintrum untrum* (see below, (15)) . The context of these occurrences is studied in order to see whether the use of the present corresponds to a 'Dutch' or an 'English' conception of the instant of duration (Korrel's first distinction).

I have divided the data in this section according to the three differences examined by Korrel, giving usage in relevant periods of English (from Old to early Modern). As is to be expected, given the contexts needed for interesting examples, these periods are not equally represented. Furthermore, I shall focus on periods during which changes seem to occur. Following the presentation of usage, I shall analyze and discuss the evidence obtained.

2.3.1 Past events extending into the present

Old English

Visser (1973: §792) gives four examples of the use, in Old English, of the present of continuation:

(14) þu meaht nu þe self geseon ..., Eue seo gode, þæt þe *is* ungelic wlite and wæstmas, siððan þu minum wordum getruwodest. (*Genesis* 611)

"Thou canst now see ..., good Eve, that there *is* different brightness and growths since thou [hast] trusted my words."

(15) Efne min wif *is* for manegum wintrum untrum. (Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*, 474,43)

"Even my wife *is* ill for many years."

(16) Longe tid mið iuh *am* I (OE *Gospels.* John XIV,9) (v.r.:ic wæs; 1611 Auth. V:Have I been).

"A long time I *am* with you."

(17) fram iohannes dagum ... oð þis(,) heofena rice *þolað* nead. (Mt. XI,12)

"From John's days ...unto this, the kingdom of heaven *suffers* need."

Three of these, the reader will notice, are with the verb *to be*. This verb is the one most often found in such a situation throughout the history of English, as well as in Modern Dutch. Its meaning is one of utmost stativity; it describes an unchanging situation, more than just a habit. All of these examples describe situations which are ongoing and will probably not change in a near future; they express states of affair rather than changing situations, "eternal truths" as it were.

Middle English

In Middle English, one finds many examples of stative verbs used in the simple present in contexts of a continuation of the event (unless otherwise indicated, the examples are from Visser 1973: §792):

(18)   þat folc gan to spelien Irlondes speche And aver seoððen þa lazen *wu-nieð* a þan londe. (*Laȝamon Brut* 10070)

(19)   A grete Daneis felde ...þat euer siþen hiderward kampedene men *kalle*. (R.Brunne,*Chron.* (1810),2)

These two examples from early ME show a conception of the moment of duration of a Dutch kind. It can be argued that had the writer used *hað wunid* or *haue kalled*, he would have meant that things are no longer the same. This seems also to be the case for later texts:

(20)   Siþthe þet Babyl was ybuld men *spekeþ* dyvers tonges, so þat dyvers men *buþ* straunge to oþer and *knoweþ* nogt of here speche. (Trevisa, *Dialogue between a Lord and a Clerk*, 1-3; in Burrow & Turville-Petre 1992: 214)

(21)   I herde no worde ffrome hyme sith you departyd: for ther *commyth* no passage this viij dayese. (1476 Stonor *Lett.* (Camd.) no.175, p.15)

(22)   Thy dirt *clevis* til hir towis this twenty yere. (1500-20 Wil. Dunbar (*Poems*, ed. Mackenzie) p. 17, 452)

(23)   since I am come hither, I *sette* by death euery daye lesse than other. (c1522-9 St. Th. More, *Let.* (*Works* 1559) 1448, c1)

Here, *have set* would have been felt to imply a series of settings which have presumably come to an end.

(24)   vnto thys daye all posteritye *goe* crroked [sic] thereof. (Idem (*Works* 1557) 85, c12)

The use of *goe* conveys the impression of a characteristic inherent to posterity seen as an inseparable whole. The inherent character of the process is often present in this type of events. It is somewhat reminiscent of the Spanish *ser/estar* opposition, or of the distinction between *He is funny* and *He is being funny*. The simple present is used in sentences such as the above for the expression of something which is unchanging whereas the present perfect would imply a possible change. Similar notion of long-term characteristic would seem to apply in:

(25)   The deuell *synneth* sence ye begynnynge. (1535 Coverdale, *i John* III, 8(i))

(26)   The great Sowdon ... thought himselfe more then his matche, and long since you were born, *hath* he that Empire too. (Idem, 1141, c11)

It would seem that verbs which tend to be what could be called 'core-stative,' verbs like *be, have* (in their non-auxiliary use), *know* and the like, are those which are more often used in the simple present form to evoke past events extending up to the present in early Middle English. In Dutch, there does not seem to be any differentiation within 'state' verbs. This was apparently the case in OE; the difference seems to arise when the new representation of duration begins to set in.

However, not all English dialects of the 14th and 15th centuries exhibit such tendencies, as we can observe from collections such as the *Cursor Mundi* manuscripts or the *Cely Letters*. The former is a 14th c. poem of which there exist twelve different MSS. Two of these are of a particular interest: the Fairfax MS and the Göttingen; both, according to Hupe (1893), are taken from the same source — which he calls 'omega' — but Fairfax is in a later northwest dialect (second half of the 14th c.). He comments: "The scribe of F. alters [the text] not only because of his dialect, or because his language is later..." (1893: 81). The *Cely Letters* are taken from the correspondence of an English family of traders. Seized, together with more relevant evidence, during a legal dispute between two of the Cely brothers, this correspondence has since become part of the national archives. The principal advantage of these letters lies in the fact that the language used is very close to the spoken tongue. One could even say that they wrote as they spoke. "There is little striving for literary effect in the letters. At best the writing is governed by the rhythms of ordinary speech; at worst it lapses into long formless sentences..." (Hanham 1975: xxvi). This is especially evident in the orthography, like that of personal names, for instance one finds, for their family name: *Cely, Cele, Sely(e), Silait*, etc.

There are some interesting variations between the many writers of these letters

(see below, 2.3.2 and 2.3.3) but there are also, however, some constants in their usage: one of these is the oft used phrase "to have no writing since":

(27)   I marwhell grettely that I haue <no> wrytyng frome you syn Geyos departyd. (Richard II, Lett. 118).

(28)   I marwhell grettely that whe haue no wrytyng of my brothers comyng to Calleys. (Id., Lett 126)

(29)   I thynke long tyl I haue wrytyng from the of syche maters as ye haue to doe for me at the marte. (Richard I, Lett. 13)

This, however, could be included in the fixed phrases or opening formulae which Hanham (1975: xxvi) talks of. It could be felt even by the epistolists as somewhat archaic rather than be the sign of a specific representation of the instant.

Marlowe's works also exhibit a double treatment of state-like verbs with *since*. With core statives, one finds the simple non-past as in:

(30)   'T*is* thirty winters long since some of us/ Did... (*Jew of Malta* I, ii, 306)

(31)   since this town was besieg'd, my gain *grows* cold (id. III, i, 1)

(32)   which ever since a red morn *doth* foretell (*Hero and Leander*, III, 178)

These verbs all express a current state of affairs. "It has been thirty winters" would, the first example tells us, express a break in the time stretch, that something has changed. An interesting parallel is offered by the following examples:

(33)   Not Hylas was more mourned of Hercules / Than thou *hast been* of me since thy exile (*Hero and Leander*, I, i, 145)

(34)   for since he was exiled she neither *walks* abroad, nor comes in sight. (*Edward II*, II, i, 24-5)

The exile in question is that of Gaveston, but in the first passage, the sentence is spoken as he reveals himself to the King, thereby showing that he is no longer in exile. In the second case, the Queen does not know of his return and so still mourns,

hence the simple present. These sorts of examples could still be found up to the last century (from Visser 1973: §793):

(35) We *are* thieves from our cradles, and will die so. (Beaumont & Fl., *Thierry Theod.* V, i)

Here, no change is possible, as "will die so" makes clear.

(36) You *are* not what you were, since yesterday. (1681 Dryden, *Spanish Friar* (Mermaid) III, iii)

This is a clear case of a present state, if this is a Dutch-like representation "have been" would be felt as inappropriate since "were" is used immediately after.

(37) A Coach or Chair I *am* obliged to for all my Motions... ever since I can remember. (1712 Steele, *Spectator* no 534)

As in (37), no change can be foreseen in this event.

(38) Well, Lady Mab, and how *are* you this long time? (1867 Trollope, *Duke's Ch.* 2, 264)

One would clearly expect a present perfect here, were the event represented as it is in today's English. There is also this interesting example from a Jamaican man:

(39) He said something that really *bothers* me up to now... hum... that really *bothered* me (CBC-TV 12.3.94, 23h48).

Although the use of the present could be due to a (performance) error (the speaker thinking "that bothers me" period, and adding "up to now"), it seems somewhat unlikely that he would have used a perfect (even without "up to now", a perfect would be preferable) since he corrected his "mistake" with a simple past.

2.3.2 Usage with precise past time adverbials

Old English

Attested use of the present perfect in Old English texts is so rare that some grammarians even question its existence. It is however found sometimes and Visser (1973: § 805) gives a few examples of the use of the present perfect with past time adjuncts

in Old English:

(40)   sibbe gelærað, þa ær wonsælge *awegen habbaþ* (*Maxims I*,I,20)

       "teach peace, which the humblest have before taken away."

(41)   þæt he wite, ...hu he hades wyrðe sy and hu he hine ærþam *gehealden*

       wið God and wið men *hæbbe* (Wulfstan, *Polity*, p.222;18)

       "That he know ...how he be worthy of rank and how he before *has held*

       himself against God and men."

(42)   ure sunne þat we *abbet idon* erþisse (*OEHom*, (Morris) i,II)

       "Our sins that we *have commited* before..."

These examples are, however, in no way conclusive since *ær* means 'before' and one
can use the perfect with this adverb even today, as it is not a precise time indicator.

Caro (1899) studied the question and commented that the use of the perfect with
a precise-point past time adverbial is exceedingly rare in OE. He was able to find only
four examples in his corpus, of which two, he says, are doubtful (1899: 65). The less
dubious two are (from Caro 1896: 410):

(43)   Wes þu, Hroðgar hal! ic eom Higelaces mæg ond mago-ðegn; *hæbbe* ic

       mærða fela *ongunnen* on geogoþe. (*Beowulf*, 407ff.)

       "Health to thee, Hrothgar! I am Higelace's kinsman and follower; many

       famous deeds have I in my youth done."

Although this could still be said if the speaker considered his youth not to be so far
away, this seems unlikely since the speaker speaks the way he does.

(44)   Maniȝe syndon in þysse mæran byriȝ, þara þe þu ȝehweorfest to heofon-

       leohte þurh minne naman, þeah hie morðes feala in fyrndaȝum *ȝefremed*

       habban. (*Andreas*, 973ff.)

       "Many are [there] in this famous town that thou changedest to heav-

       enly light through My name, though they have in days of yore brought

       about many deaths."

The days of yore are over and done with, and it is unlikely that the speaker would

past would probably have been used, unless the forms were considered as perfects of experience, in which case both examples could still be said today.

Early Middle English

According to Caro (1896), there are more examples of such use in ME, but this could be simply because we possess more texts of this period, and because these contain more direct-speech contexts. The following examples are given in Visser (1973: §805):

(45) schewe to him fullish ...al þat euer þat he *hast doon* þat yer. (*Three ME Sermons* 19,35)

Although "has done that year" could still be said today, "ever" would render this improbable.

(46) Many Greke þat day fatally *haþ lorn* his lif. (Lydgate, *Troy Bk*, 3,1820)

"That" indicates a distance from the present which is incompatible with a present-day representation.

(47) hic *abbe ydon* al myn youth, ofte, and ofte, long *yloued* and yerne *yebeden*. (*Worcester Cath.* Ms Q50)

The last example does not provide us with much evidence, for it can still be used now, *al myn youth* not being a very precise time adjunct depending on the age the speaker attributes himself. The following is also ambivalent:

(48) Arthur tha up aras; and strehte his aermes. / he aras up and adun sat; swulc he weore swithe seoc. / tha axede hine an uaeir cniht; Lauerd hu *hauest* thu *iuaren* to-niht. (*Layamon Brut* II,734)

If the servant was asking Arthur this question just as the latter was getting up, one could perhaps imagine the present perfect being used even in Modern English, although it would still sound better without the time adverbial, "how have you slept."

Late Middle English

In the *Cely Letters*, we can observe diverse usages, especially some notable differences between Richard the Elder and his sons, particularly his homonym who had a more extensive education and who spent more time in the northern regions of England. Hanham (1975: xiv) observes that Richard the Younger's writing "is not the usual merchant's hand of the period, and his language, especially early in the correspondence, shows a few northern traits not shared by other members of the family". He concludes that "these imprecise pieces of evidence may indicate that Richard was educated apart from the rest of the family, possibly in the household of his mother's brother [who] was made Dean of Newark College, Leicester, in 1450 and became Dean of York in 1452". Here is a sample of Richard the Elder's dialect — with attention to what interests us:

(49)   The laste day of Apperell I *haue resayuyd* ij letters from the... (Lett. 20)

(50)   ...for the weche I am wyll plesyd, werefor I *haue schepyd* at London the laste day of May, xvij sarplerys of my Cottyswolde woll... (Lett. 90; cf. 89)

(51)   I gret you wyll, and I lette you wyt I *haue payd* for xxiij s. iiij d. of the sarplere for xxij sarplerys woll and fell to Sir Wyll Stoker, Mayar of the Stapyll, the xiij day of Octobor (Lett. 106)

This can be compared with Richard the Younger's, which looks much more 'modern', more like present day use of English:

(52)   Informynge you the ixth day of Desembyr I *ressauyd* ij lettyrs from you (Lett. 81)

(53)   Plese hyt yow to wndyrstond thys same day I *ressauyd* a letter frowm yow be Kay,... (Lett. 134)

Parallels of this sort can also be drawn between the usage of the other authors of the *Cely Letters*:

(54) ...fferthermore informynge yow that the xiij day of Aprell the yeere aboue said, I Robard Cely *haue ressayuyd* of Wylliam Eston, mersar of London, xij li. ster. ... (Robert C., Lett. 3)

(55) ...the whych my master *schyppyd* at the porte off London the laste day off Maye yn anno abowe sayd ... (William C., Lett. 89)

Hanham notes that "William's precise relationship [to the rest of the family] has not been determined" (1975: xi) and so we do not know where he came from nor where he was educated. Hanham also points out that he "seems to have been linguistically more sophisticated than his masters" (1975: xvi) and so could have come from a more "educated" branch, or a more northern one.

It is interesting to note that whereas the father alternates between using the present perfect and the simple past with precise past-time adjuncts, the son does not. Whenever a date or a time is indicated, Richard the Younger invariably uses the simple past:

(56) Syr, I *haue resauyd* a letter frowm yov wrytyn at Calles apon Sent Steuyns Day, (Lett 114)

(57) Syr, I *haue ressauyd* ij lettyrs from yow derectyd to howre father. (Lett. 127)

(58) the xxvj day of thys monthe I *resauyd* ij lettyrs frome you, (Lett. 95)

(59) and the Satterday aftyr howr departtyng whe *come* [*i.e.* came] to the Kyng to Helttame, (Lett. 108)

Another collection of letters (and other documents), spanning almost a century and encompassing the same period, offers another perspective on the subject. These are *The Paston Letters 1422-1509* coming principally from what could be considered the aristocracy, most often from Norfolk. In this collection one finds writings from (or to) such people as Henry VI, Edward IV and Richard III, as well as from Lord Hastings and Sir John Fastolf (Shakespeare's Falstaff). What is interesting in these is that most of the writers seem to use a single dialect with but a few exceptions.

For instance, Margaret Paston most often uses the perfect as one would in modern English:

(60) Right worchipfull hosbond, I recommand me to yow, praying yow to wete that I *have receyved* your letter *this day* that ye sent me be Yelvertonys man (Lett. 62).

But not always, it would seem, though instances like the above are very rare:

(61) Your fader and myn *was* dysday sevenyth [*this day se'nnight*] at Berkelys ... (Lett. 36).

The Pastons are not the only ones to use a dialect which we could call *modern* with regard to the representation of the instant; here is another example:

(62) for the word [*world*] *is* right wilde, and *have be* sythyn Heydonz sauffe gard was proclamyd at Walsyngham; (Wm Lomner, 399)

Other authors of that collection, however, seem to use what would be, from the point of view of the representation of the instant, a dialect closer to Dutch or German:

(63) certyfyyng zow that I *have spok* with John Rwsse, and Playter spok with[7] him bothe, on Fryday be for Seynt Barthelmw. (Clement P., 411).

(64) Plesith it your maysterschip to witte that Mr. John and I, with other mo, *have ben* at Cotton on Friday last passed (Richard Calle, 418)

(65) And this daye the seide Jenney *hathe sent* doune to the scheryff an other writte called an *habeas corpus* retornable *crastino Animarum...* (R. Calle, 420).

This Richard Calle was a servant to John Paston and may not have been from the same region of England. It could also be a matter not of geographical differences, but rather of sociolect between servant and master. There are also in these letters sentences which could be argued to be still grammatical in modern-day English:

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[7]Note that *on Fryday* might be felt to refer to *Playter spok* and the writer is certifying that he *has spoken* with John Russe. But the comma might indicate that "and Playter..." is in apposition, and so *Fryday* would refer to *have spok*.

(66)   And they *have* thys weke *takyn* iiij vesselys of Wyntyrton; (Agnes P., 80)

(67)   Sir Thomas Keriel *is take* prisoner...[has been?] (Wm Lomner, 93)

(68)   Sir John Tatersalle and the baly of Walsynham and the constabyll *hathe take* the parson of Snoryng and iiij of hys men, and sete hem fast in the stokys on Monday at nyght; (M.P., 403)

Is *sete* a simple past or a past participle here? And is *hathe take* linked to *Monday*?

(69)   I *have ben* at Wetyng and there *hald* court and lete on Hok-monday as hit *hath bene* of olde tyme accostomed. ("W.C.", 447)

"Old time" is not precise and "have been" may not be related to Hok-monday and so this is still sayable.

(70)   I *have purweyid* for for your herying a non after your departyng, ... his servirtesse ston chargyd for iiijli vjs viijd, as John Seyve *hath seyd* to me or the tyme that I receyvyd your leter (Wm Pekoc, 807)

This mysterious *or* is puzzling. Did the writer want to write *on*, meaning 'at' or was he refering to another instance?

2.3.3   Present relevance of past actions

The easiest way to locate instances of Dutch-like present relevance is in parallels between the simple past and the present perfect. Indeed, in languages using a representation of the instant like that of Modern Dutch (such as German for instance), two verb forms are often closer related, with regard to their respective spheres of usage than in present-day English.

Old English

According to Mitchell (1985: §723), "the well-known overlap between the past tense and the periphrasis is attested by their use in parallel or connected sentences". He gives the following comparisons:

(71) a. For hwylcum oðrum woldes þu þe sprecan buton for ðæm þe þu nu

sædes? (*Boethius* 118.29)

"For which other would thou speak but for that which thou said."

b. Genog ic þe *hæbbe* nu *gereaht*, (id. 74.16)

"Enough I have now heard of thee"

(72) a. þaða he genealæhte, þa ascode se Hælend hine, Hwæt wylt ðu þæt

ic þe dó? He cwæð, Drihten, þæt ic mage geseon. And se Hælend

him cwæðto, Loca nu: þin geleafa hæfð ðe gehæled. And he ðærrihte

geseah, ... (id. i.152.23)

"When he came near Jesus asked him, what wilt thou that I shall do

unto you? He said, Lord, that I may see. And Jesus said to him, Look

now, thy belief healed thee."

b. To ðam leohte soðlice ure geleafa us sceal gebringan, swa swa Crist

cwæðto ðam blindan menn, Lóca nu, þin geleafa ðe gehælde (Ælfric

Catholic Homilies i.158.32)

"To that light verily our faith shall bring us, as Christ said to the blind

man, 'Look now, Thy belief has healed thee'."

This second pair is interesting in that although both come from the same homily and
recount the same episode, (72 a) seems to be a direct quote from the Gospel (þe we
nu gehyrdon of ðæs diacones muðe. "Which we now have heard from the deacon's
mouth."). (72 b), on the other hand, is a retelling and analysis of the story in the
words of Ælfric. The difference in verb forms would come from a slightly different
conception of the event between the two writers (there are also instances where Ælfric
does not use the same orthography as the version of the Gospel he uses, for instance,
La leof, do þæt ic mage *geseon* instead of *mæge.*)

Mitchell also gives parallels inside the same paragraph, as with the two verbs in:

(73)   ...healsbeaga mæst / þara þe ic on foldan *gefrægen hæbbe.* / Nænigne
 ic under swegle selran *hyrde* / hordmaðum hæleþa... *(Beowulf* 1195)
"The biggest necklaces on Earth that I have heard of. I never heard of
such great hoarded treasure under the sky.

The two events are coincident in a way and if the two verb forms were as distant as
in MnE, the events would call for the same verb form. Mitchell also gives examples
of parallels in the same sentences:

(74)   Ono hwæt þu nu *hafast* þurh Godes gife þinra feonda hond *beswicade*
... 7 þu þurh his sylene 7 gife þæm rice *onfenge* ..., *(Bede* 132.24)
"Lo! what thou now hast through God's gift thy foes' power over-
come ... and thou through His munificence and gift took hold of the
kingdom."

This is a very interesting example, for the verb forms seem to go against the time
frame of the events. Only a close relation between the preterite and the present
perfect could allow that.

(75)   Annania, deofol be *pæhte* ðine heortan, and ðu *hæfst alogen* þam Halgan
Gaste, *(ÆlCHom*, i.316.26).
"Annania, the devil seduced thy spirit, and thou hast lied to the Holy
Ghost."

Here the two verbs mark different time-spheres, as the seduction precedes the lie; the
lie could however been seen as relevant to the present, and so this could still be said
today.

(76)   Nu cwom elþeodig, / þone ic æt on firenum fæstne talde, / *hafað* mec
bereafod rihta gehwylces, / feohgestreona, *(Elen* 907)
"Now came foreigners, that I in sins fast told, have me bereaved of
every right of (all) treasures."

Here again, the bereavement may be felt as having present relevance for the speaker.

Early Middle English

An 'overstretched' present relevance can also be observed in early Middle English, as in:

(77) [Talking about a buried man] 'Hit mygt not be bot such a mon in mynde stode long. / He *has ben* kyng of þis kith, as couthely hit semes, / He lyes dolven þus depe; hit is a derfe wonder / But summe segge couthe say þat he hym *sene hade.*' (*St Erkenwald*, ll. 97-100, in B. & T.-P. 1992: 204)

The kingship of the man being seemingly long over (this is supported by the following verb, which is a past perfect) the present perfect shows a different conception of the present instant.

(78) [the buried man talking] 'Nay, bisshop,' quod þat body, 'enbawmyd wos I never, / Ne no monnes counsell my cloth *has kepyd* unwemmyd,...'
      (Id. ll. 265-66)

Here we see why the speaker chose the past form for "embalmed" and the present perfect for "keep" since he is obviously not in an embalmed state and his clothes are still solid. The next example shows an interesting parallel use of the present perfect and the simple past:

(79) þa weoren þa Frensce men þer-fore swiþe uæine / for toward Iulius heo hæfden grome. 7 for þi weoren fæin of his scome / Ælc Frensc-mon þe wes aht. *hæfð* hine seofne *bi-þoht* / and *seide* to his iuere. Ne wurðe he nauere isæle / þe nu and auere-mare. buȝe [to] Cesare / þe Bruttes habbeð ouer-cumen 7 of heore londe idriuen. (*Laȝamon Brut*, 3821)
      "...each Frenchman that were eight, has thought themself seven, and said to his friend he would never bow to Caesar which Brutus has overcome and driven from their land."

Here, *hæfð bi-þoht* is predicated of the same subject as *seide* and forms part of the same past narrative, which tends to indicate a confusion between the two verb forms.

Late Middle English

There are in the *Cely Letters* numerous instances of parallels between the present perfect and the simple past:

(80) I grete you wyll, and I *haue resayuyd* of Lokynton schepe a pype (...), and I *payd* v s(hillings) for the fraythe and v s. for the custom, for Rychard Cely *was* at Norlayge at that tyme, and *hathe packeyd* my woll wyt Wyll Medewynter (Richard I, lett. 85).

The alternation between *was* and *hathe packeyd* shows a close relation between the two 'tenses', a relationship closer than one would expect in MnE.

(81) Syr, I *haue spokyn* wyth Tomas Adam, and I *towl[d]* hym that I proposyd to stope Robard from hys passagye, and he *has desyryd* me to spar Robat, for and I *reyst* hym ther ys no mane that wyll helpe hym owt of preson (Richard II, lett. 32).

Interestingly enough, here it is Richard the Younger who alternates between a present perfect and a simple past for the same time frame. It could simply be that he wanted to convey a different impression for the different events, the speaking and desiring being more relevant in his eyes. *I have spoken* tells us of a mission now accomplished and *has desyred me* of a moral obligation Cely feels he has towards Adam. But still, the alternation sounds strange to modern ears.

During this period, a development is observable between different MSS of the *Cursor Mundi*, usually Cotton and Göttingen on one hand and Fairfax on the other. The *Cursor* is a retelling of (biblical) history ('The cursor o werld') which sometimes makes use of dialogues where one can find instances of the present perfect. As I have mentioned above, the Fairfax MS is of a later date and its scribe often takes certain liberties with phraseology. Some of these liberties tend to indicate a change similar to that seen in the Cely letters, as these excerpts show:

(82) Als þou *has* forwit *herd* me sai (Cotton, 25062)

(83) als be-fore ge *herde* me say. (Fairfax)

(84)   And giue us ioi for euer mar þat þou us vnto *boght*. (Cotton, 25617–8)

(85)   & gif vs ioye for euer-mare/ þat þou to vs *has bogt*. (Fairfax)

(86)   Bot siþen *has kyd* þi merci mare,/ To man- kind for to cast o care,/ þat if he sin on ani wise,/ Wit scrift & penaunce mai he rise. (Cotton, 25704)

(87)   bot siþin þou *kid* þi merci mare/ til mankinde for to caste of care./ þat if he synne on ani wise/ wiþ shrift & penance mai he rise. (Fairfax)

The following passage (as given in Visser 1973: §805), where the forms alternate constantly, is also of interest since there would be little reason for this alternation were a MnE representation of the moment of duration at work.

(88)   for my scrud I was in, *Gaf* I man sample for to syn... oft I *helde* my lightly late... To crist ic *haue* un-buxum *bene* ...un-buxum *haf* I *bene*... Gayn haly kyrk *was* I rebell... Gayn my better *haue* I *bene* ...in dedes... Wrangwyse *haue* I *wryþen* wyte... Myn euen-cristen *haue* I *hurt*, And oft un-saght o him I *said*... Oft I *was* to him wit vn-right. (28084-204)

There are also examples from other texts, such as parallels from the *Evangelium Nicomedi* (c1350)(ed. Klotz) (see Visser §805) and also, in diverse translations of the Bible:

(89)   :

Wyclif (c1380)	variant reading
Alle my weies thou beforn *seye*	... *hast* befor *seien* (Ps 138,4)
creature, the which Gode *made*	... *hath maad.* (Mk XIII,19)
	Tyndale (1534)
thou lord in the begynnynge *foundidist* the erthe	...in the begynninge *hath layde* the foundacion on the erth (Hebr I,10)
bi siluan... I *wroote* shortly	By Siluanus... *have* I *written* (I Peter V,12)

These last two excerpts are somewhat surprising in that it is the later text which

uses the perfect where one finds the preterite in Wyclif. This could be explained by the fact that the text in question is a translation of the Bible or because Wyclif used a different dialect. The former case opens up two possibilities: there may have been contamination of Latin forms in the English text or it may be that Tyndale, deliberately or not, made use of a more archaic style.

In the following example, the perfect is surrounded by simple pasts:

(90)   anon þe wylde loves rage / In which no man can governe / *Haþ mad*
       him þat he can noght werne, / Bot fell al hol to hire assent. (Gower,
       Con.Am. 2620-22, from B&TP)

This occurs time and again in Gower's writings as well as in other authors. In *Sir Orfeo*, for instance, the present perfect is often used in these *échappées*. These 'historical present perfects' seem to be used to provide a more vivid sense of the action:

(91)   His wiif he tok bi þe hond (...) And went him out of þat þede; (...)
       so long he *haþ* þe way *ynome*, to Winchester he *is ycome* (*Sir Orfeo*,
       474-8, in B. & T.-P. 1992).

In this case, it could also simply be used for rhyme (*ynome* and *ycome*). These sorts of parallels do not point a different realization of the moment of duration as such, since they can be the result of stylistic considerations.

2.4 Analysis

Although it is a partial impediment to analysis, the uneven spread of the evidence does not prevent us from drawing some conclusions concerning the representation of δ in different periods of English.

2.4.1 Middle English

Dialect

The OE documents available do not offer many instances of contexts favourable to the sort of sentences necessary for this survey of usage. We can however deduce that the situation of OE was similar to that of eME — unless of course there has been more than one shift in the course of the history of English. Nevertheless, the few examples of OE agree with those of eME. We can observe, in eME (cf. examples (18), (19), (45), (46), (49)–(51), (63)–(65), (77)–(80) and (82)–(85) for ME, and (14)–(17) and (40)–(45) for OE) a situation closer to that of Modern Dutch than MnE. This supports the view that the representation of δ in OE was partly actualized. Things, however, are changing during the ME period.

For one thing, a 'generation gap' seems to have existed between Richard Cely the Elder and some of his sons. They may have spoken different dialects where the conception of the instant was not the same. This indicates that the early MnE representation is taking form and metaphase events can no longer sustain the old Germanic conception. From what we can see in his letters (egs. 49–51 and 80), Richard Cely the Elder made use of the simple present and the perfect in the same way as one does in modern Dutch or German. This is especially true with regards to his use of the present perfect with time adjuncts (or continuing events). But while his construal of present relevance is closer to that of Modern Dutch than of Modern English, his son Richard (the Younger) uses a construal more like that of Modern English.

But one is tempted, however, to question the hypothesis of a shift occurring around the 15th c. which would have transformed English. Could it be that the occurrences presented here are 'deviant', that they do not reflect the normal use, English having always been the way it is now? Could it not be argued that the Cely generation gap, or the difference of usage between the Pastons and their servants, was due to a

difference in schooling?

These questions are legitimate. However, the evidence from early ME supports the hypothesis of a different conception, hence the existence of a shift. It is quite conceivable that the Modern English representation of δ became established in dialects of 'more educated' people before reaching the lower classes. Another possibility is that the new setting occurred first in Northern England and then spread south. Richard Cely the Younger lived and was probably educated in the North, the Pastons are from Norfolk (we do not know where Richard Calle came from) and the *Cursor Mundi* is a Northumbrian poem (furthermore, the Fairfax MS is "written in a Northwestern dialect"; and the Edinburg MS, which sometimes seems closer to Fairfax than to the others, is "in a Northumbrian dialect" (Hupe 1893: 103)). Schooling could also have had an influence on the conception of the instant depending on the particular dialect used by the school. This does not invalidate the hypothesis of a shift, it can even support it.

Another possibility is that the Northern dialect evolved the representation found in MnE long before the others. One must remember that there was no unity among the English dialects so that one of the many dialects of the island could have developed this representation early on. As there is no way to verify this for the moment however, it must remain a mere hypothesis. We would then be faced with a case of linguistic diffusion instead of grammatical change.

From a geographical point of view (if we exclude regions whence few medieval English texts came like Wales or Cornwall), we can see an almost even spread of MSS, south of York, of the authors in whose writings an OE representation is present (for instance, Richard Cely the Elder). In actual fact, this distribution gives us more an idea of where the hypothetical dialect(s) was (were) not situated (cf. Bélanger 1995b: 81).

This, however, could be explained, in part, by the fact that few Northumbrian

texts exist for the Old and Middle English periods. We must remember, however, the fact that Richard Cely the Younger, the Pastons and others came from this region of England. On the other hand, it is also reminiscent of a comment made by W.W. Skeat:

> The name "Anglo-Saxon" was certainly inappropriate [for the OE language], as the speakers of it were mostly Saxons and not Angles at all; [...] But now that the true relationship of the old dialects is known, it is not uncommon for scholars to speak of the Wessex dialect as "Saxon," and of the Northumbrian and Mercian dialects as "Anglian"; for the latter are found to have some features in common that differ sharply form those found in "Saxon" (1912: 12).

Could it be that the "Angles" did not have the same representation of the instant as the "Saxons" ? If the Northern dialect hypothesis is adopted, the question then revolves around why the representation of this particular dialect prevailed from ME onward.

But the evidence for this hypothesis is tenuous. There are, in a sense, not enough elements to convict beyond the shadow of a doubt. We could very well say that the geographical spread is due to a lack of Northumbrian dialects and that the differences observed between Richard the Younger and his father — as well as that between the Pastons and some of their staff — is in fact due to education. As for the Fairfax and Edinburg MSS of the *Cursor Mundi*, not only were they written in a Northern dialect, but we must not discount the fact that they were of a later hand. The hypothezied dialect could have come from some centre such as Oxford. There is not much evidence as yet to form any clear idea of where the use came from; we will nevertheless return to this question later on.

Choice

Many elements underlie the 'choice' of a particular form of a language: conquests and other historical happenings or geopolitical situations, local and social prestige,

intermarriage and many other sociolinguistic considerations.[8] But in the case which interests us, the 'choice' relates to a fundamental aspect of the representational capabilities of the language. It pertains to the very core of its semantical and grammatical structure and so has to be in accordance to the whole of the language. If there has been not an evolution but a 'choice', we must conclude that it may very well be that the new representation of δ had become a necessity in the state the language had arrived at. We must remember that when unconsciously constructing his mother tongue, the infant creates a system able to best account for the data and allowing him to express his experience. As Guillaume (1984a: 59) tells us,

> Diachronic linguistics grasps things longitudinally, in time, which makes them change, perturbs them, disorganizes them, and would destroy them if some contrary, organizing force did not intervene. ...In language, systematic organization works on the disorganization that a language inherits from instant to instant. Actually, two opposing forces are involved here, the one descending and disorganizing, the other ascending and organizing (Guillaume 1984a: 59).

The babbler, as he unconsciously reconstructs the system of his caretakers, does so by observing their utterances and trying to construct the best system which could account for them. Thus the system is always moving towards what best can express linguistic realities. This is not unlike what happens in other complex dynamic systems, like the biosphere and its ecological niches:

> The answer lies in the way the information about the environment is recorded. In complex adaptive systems, it is not merely listed in what computer scientists would call a look-up table. Instead, the regularities of the experience are encapsulated in highly compressed form as a *model* or *theory* or *schema*. Such a schema is usually approximate, sometimes wrong, but it may be adaptive if it can make useful predictions including interpolation and extrapolation

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[8]For a comprehensive study of these factors, I would first draw the attention of the reader to the works of Labov, especially *Sociolinguistic Patterns*, as well as on the wealth of notable opuses on the subject.

and sometimes generalization to situations very different from those previously encountered (Gell-Mann 1992: 10).

Language, in Psychomechanics, is viewed in the same way; it is not a list of terms, but a system of representation and is to be studied accordingly.

Either way, by evolution or by choice, the representation is the result of linguistic conditions which accept it. Whether the modern representation of the instant *evolved* at this particular point in time or appeared earlier and then *prevailed*, would be too hard to determine here and does not significantly change the analysis of the course of its existence in Modern English.

2.4.2 Modern English

The shift consequent upon the institution of the new conception of the event would have begun in or around the 15th c. and would have affected different types of verbs differently. A second step of this change affected a particular set of verbs, 'core stative' verbs such as *be, have, know*, etc. for, as we have seen, their very semantic nature precludes, more than any other state verbs, any action-like application.

Core-stative verbs are conceived by the speaker as a homogenous whole, as representing an event which does not accept progress, internal change or development in any way. It is as though the kinetic representation of time did not hold with these verbs. Consequently, since the only way to perceive time is through change, if there is no change the event is felt to be a unified whole: any point in it, *is* it, so if nothing has changed, one cannot, in this conception, be after the event, as in "I have been in hospital for three days". This is not the case with repeated events, or the like, as in:

(92) For generations people have been burning real candles on the Christmas tree. That is quite normal. So for generations farms have been burning down (in Korrel 1991: 40).

Here one does not conceive of a unified temporal extent, but of a series of actions,

or *phases*, each equal to the others, whence Hirtle's term *monophase events* or Langacker's *perfective processes*. The internal temporal constituency of these events, as compared to core-stative ones, is not the same. One could draw a parallel with the difference between a full line and a very closely-knit dotted one: in the latter case, each dot-space combination represents a phase. In this case it is conceivable in some languages (as in English, for instance) to be after some phases while still within the series whereas in core-stative verbs, this is not so. This might be at the source of a distinct treatment of core-stative verbs as opposed to other state verbs.

A second shift would then have occurred, around the 19th c., affecting the remaining verbs, making it awkward, for most people at least,[9] to use *be* and other stative verbs in the simple present to express continuing events. English would have then experienced not one but two shifts in the representation of the present: a two-step evolution, as it were. On the other hand, there may have been only one shift, the consequences of which was felt first in some verbs and only later in others.

Conclusion

The difference of usage between the English present perfect and its Germanic counterparts has here been abscribed to a representational change — that of the "moment of duration", as defined in § 2.1 — which would have occured around the 15th century. We need not think hard to conclude that such a fundamental modification of the representational capabilities of the English verb system must have had other observable effects in syntactic usage. It will be the purpose of the following chapters to investigate this claim.

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[9]It is possible that some people still retain the old conception.

Chapter 3

Changes in the verb system

Introduction

Needless to say, during the ME period within the verb system of English a great number of changes occurred some of which are more important than others, more mystifying to the historical linguist. I will attempt, in this chapter, to clear the terrain for the investigations of the subsequent chapters, pointing to the changes which may have something to do with the *Korrel shift* just presented. It should be understood that I cannot cover all of the transformations the verb system has undergone since the beginning of written English, but I shall try to address some of the major ones.

The following presents a (need I say, inexhaustive) list of the various changes which have been observed in the English verb system (as pointed out especially by Denison 1993):

- Disappearance of verbal prefixes ('preverbs') and development of prepositional passives;

- Loss of verbal morphology for the marking of mood, tense and person;

- Change in word order from verb-second (verb-final) to verb-median (verb-third);

- Changes in the behaviour of impersonals;

- Development of "Dative movement";

- Disappearance of *be*-perfects;

- Growth of the *to*-infinitive;

- Development of the progressive form;

- Development of *Do*-support;

- Development of a separate **Modal** category;

- Disappearance of the *gan*-periphrasis.

We will take a brief look at each of these changes in turn, keeping in mind our special interest in the possibility of an influence from the *Korrel shift*.

Other changes affecting the verb system of English include the development of a *historical present* during the ME period, the suppletion of *beon* and *weson* under *be* and the demise of *weorþan*. The first two of these occurred in other IE languages as well (suppletion in 'be' is not uncommon in Romance and Germanic languages) and do not show any indication of being related to the transformation which took place in English, affecting the representation of the verbal event. The third case is possibly the result of lexical obsolescence.

3.1   Disappearance of preverbs

In OE there was an extensive array of prefixes attachable to the verb (*a-*, *be-*, *ge-*, *for-*, etc). These affected mostly the lexical meaning of the verb (which could in turn affect the syntax[1]). Although preverbs are still found in Dutch or German,

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[1]for example, *forburnt* meant 'burnt completely' which implies a more restricted range of usage.

they gradually disappeared from English in the course of the ME period. According to Brinton (1988) and others (amongst them Leech) the function of the Germanic preverbs was taken over in English by verbal particles placed after the verb, giving us the phrasal verbs (*look up, look out,* etc.). The preverbs which remain have become more lexicalized than their German or Dutch counterparts (for example, the *for-* of *forgo*). The preverb/preposition contrast can still be easily observed in pairs such as *upkeep* vs *to keep up*.

This change in the semiology of the English verb seems to have little to do with the Korrel shift, being more likely the result of some sort of generalization or shaking off of elements, a casting out features till then inherent to the verb so as to obtain more flexible units. These words thus relieved of one of their component processes become more general, able to express, by themselves and with less morphological additions, more meanings. This transformation is related to the loss of nominal inflexions, switching from a declension system to a paradigm of prepositions, a change which is observable in a majority of IE languages.

3.1.1 Prepositional passives

Prepositional passives are sentences where a preposition is 'stranded' at the end of a passive sentence, as in:

(1) Jim was laughed at.

These structures are directly linked to the evolution of the phrasal verbs, and the loss of the preverbs. As such, they will not be considered to be relevant to the present research, as they do not seem to emanate from the change in the representation of the moment of duration of the event. However, it will be important to discuss the function of the OE preverbs with regard to aspect or *Aktionsart* when the time comes to look at the advent of the progressive.

3.2 Loss of verbal morphology

Guillaume tells us that "en l'absence de la personne, le verbe n'est pas pleinement verbe. Il avoisine le nom. Le nom et le verbe trouvent donc leur assiette dans leur propre plan. Ce n'est qu'après avoir pris incidence en lui-même, à la personne, que le verbe devient incident au nom" (1940: 23.5, f. 19). In most Germanic and Romance languages, person, like tense and mood, is morphologically marked in the verb. Less so in present-day English; weak verbs have only four forms: the infinitive/present, the past form, the present participle and the third person form with -s (in some dialects, this last form has disappeared). The strong verbs also sometimes lose their preterite/past participle distinction: as in *I seen it* (for *I saw it*). But in ME, at the time the *Cursor Mundi* (14th c.) was written (and even to some extent later, at the time of the *Cely Letters*, 15th c.), the subjunctive is still morphologically different from other moods in all persons, being distinguished by an -*e*. A few centuries before, the infinitive had an -*an/en* ending (which could be, in OE, inflected). This ending is still present in Dutch and German (-*en*).

The mood/tense formation of the verb has then become during the ME period less overt, i.e., it no longer marks many distinctions, to such an extent that some grammarians, and speakers, are questioning the very existence of the subjunctive mood in MnE.[2] The mood distinction between subjunctive and indicative is still felt, but it does not lend itself to explicit semiological manifestations except in the case of *be* and the absence of a third person singular -*s*.[3] Here we can draw a parallel with the process of the nominal inflexion loss, where lack of case endings lends a greater flexibility to nominal forms ("master" can be used in many more ways than Lat. "dominus").

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[2]Lightfoot (1991: 167) presents MnE as having no subjunctive although one can still often hear people say "If I *were* a policeman...", "I suggested that he *leave* immediately" and so on

[3]I must point out at this point that I do not consider collocations with the modal auxiliary *should* to be examples of a subjunctive mood, contra many grammarians.

This process of the NP was ascribed by Guillaume to a movement towards greater generality, not in the lexical *significate* but in the grammatical structure of words. It is probably the same with verbs. If this is the case, this change cannot be considered as the result of the Korrel shift (moreover, it started before the shift seems to have occurred)[4].

3.3 Change in word order

The place of the verb within the habitual order of the constituents of the sentence in English is not what it used to be in OE. In its earlier stages, English was in that regard closer to Modern Dutch or German: it presented a cross between what is known as *verb-second* (or 'V2') — where there is always one constituent (subject, time adverbial, etc.) before the verb in the clause — as in:

(2)   In Utrecht *vonden* de mensen het idee gek.

    "In Utrecht people found the idea crazy."

and verb final languages, where the verb comes at the end of the clause, in this case in a subordinate clause, or when verbal auxiliation occurs (as with the Dutch *voltooid*):

(3)   Jan *heeft* het boek *gelezen.*

    "jan has read the book."

"However, Old English does differ in some ways from Dutch and German. First, in coordinate sentences the second conjunct often shows the object-verb order typical of subordinate clauses, and sometimes it shows inverted order" (Lightfoot 1991: 57). A second difference is that one can find object-verb order in main clauses in OE but not in literary Dutch or German. Finally, and in consequence, verb position seems freer in OE than in Dutch and German (Lightfoot 1991: 58–60).

The transformation of word order between OE and MnE should be attributed, in

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[4]If one takes the point of view that this change was mainly, if not purely, due to phonetic factors, one must also agree with this conclusion.

part at least, to the changes occurring in the course of the history of the language in the nominal morphology, in particular the loss of case endings. With the gradual disappearance of nominal cases, word order came to be used more and more for the attribution of grammatical function, whence an enhanced rigidity in the place of the subject.

The *Korrel shift* having mainly affected the semantic resolution of the verb, it is somewhat unlikely to be the source, direct or indirect, of this linguistic change. Another important fact to consider is that, as is indicated by Lightfoot's data, the change seem to have already begun in OE, well before the argued date of the shift (cf. Lightfoot 1991: 68, fig. 3.2 and *supra*).

3.4 Change in the behaviour of impersonals

English impersonal verbs, from a diachronic perspective, have had two interesting facets. *Primo*, they had in OE the potential for being used without a semiological subject, as in

(4) Ne gedafenað biscope þæt he beo on dædum folces mannum gelic
    (ÆCHom II 10.81.16)

    "It is not fitting for a bishop to be like men of the people in deeds"

In these uses, there is not even what some would consider a "dummy" subject (*(h)it, there*, etc.). This of course is no longer the case in MnE.[5]

The second point is that there has been "a change in realisation whereby certain arguments formerly realised as non-subject come to be realised as subject of the verb" (Denison 1993: 61). The function of the causal argument, as well as its case, seems to vary in subtle ways in the data of OE:

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[5]There is, arguably the case of such sentences as "My parents were expecting a girl, and out comes me!" or "In goes the vegetables." where the lack of agreement between the verb and the 'logical' subject may be interpreted as a sign of the impersonal nature of the verb.

(5) him (DAT) ofhreow þæs mannes (ÆCHom I 8.192.16)

"to him was pity because of the man"

(6) þa ofhreow ðam munece (DAT) þæs hreoflian mægenleast (NOM) (ÆCHom I 23.336.10)

"then brought pity to the monk the leper's feebleness"

(7) se mæsse-preost (NOM) þæs mannes of- hreow (ÆLS II 26.262)

"the priest because of the man felt pity"

These changes (as with the preceding one) could very well be the result of the changes facing nominal and verbal morphology. Although the third person singular is still marked in the present (indicative), verbs such as *rain* would be ambiguous without a subject ("rains" could be either a plural noun, or a finite verb!). The changes affecting the causal argument are more likely, in view of the reduction of nominal cases, to be the result of morphological factors than of the *Korrel shift*.

3.5 Development of "Dative movement"

The problem of *dative movement* is this: why can we say, "Mary was given a present" in MnE but not in OE, or in German or Dutch for that matter? Such constructions, known as 'indirect passives' where the recipient is the apparent subject, are peculiar to present-day English. However, similar construction could be used in OE but with a dative case assigned to the recipient (hence the recipient is not the grammatical subject):

(8) Ac ðæm mæg beon suiðe hraðe geholpen from his lareowe (CP 225.22)

"But that one may be helped (it may be remedied) very quickly by the teacher"

This particular problem also involves noun morphology and the synsemantic relation between noun and verb. It is probably as much the result of factors within the NP as causes from the verb system. It does not seem at this point in time to be

linked to the subject at hand, namely a change in the representation of event time.

3.6 Disappearance of *be*-perfects

A feature of the Dutch *voltooid* (and the German *perfekt*) not found in MnE, and upon which Korrel did not touch upon in her published works, is the use of 'be' (*sein*) as an auxiliary of perfect. *Be* + past participle was also present as a perfect in Old and Middle English. But early on this use of the auxiliary declined to extinction. This evolution has most often been attributed to the appearance of the progressive form and the use of *be* with the passive (Mustanoja 1960: 501, Mitchell 1985: §735).

In light of what we have observed in the history of the perfect (Bélanger 1995b: 14ff. in appendix), there is a possibility, albeit slight, that the change in the representation of duration in the event might have had something to do with this linguistic loss. The data on the spread of *have* perfects with intransitives is, however, at odds with this idea. According to Rydén (1991: 346), it is not until the 18th century that *have* begins to really take over *be* with intransitive verbs. For example, around 1500, more than 90% of the perfects of these verbs used *be* for the perfect.

> The increased frequency of *have* was greater with change-of-place verbs, stressing the idea of action, than with other mutatives. Still, however, in the second half of the 17th century, for instance in Pepys and Dryden, *have* was in a decided minority, with, it would seem, little individual, stylistic or socio-geographic fluctuation.

If there were an influence of the *Korrel shift* on the use of *be* as a perfect marker, this influence was, it would seem, neither the sole nor the most important factor, as the timeframe of the change shows.

3.7   Growth of the *to*-infinitive

In Old English, the infinitive form of the verb was marked by a particular ending (*-en* or *-an*) and did not as often need to be preceded by *to* as in MnE. This change could be conceived as a switch from a morphological marking system (V-*en*) to a syntactic one (*to* V). There are many facts which lead me to discard this simplistic analysis, especially the status attributed to *to*. Although many grammarians and linguists see *to* as a mere marker, there are reasons to believe that it is not so (Pullum 1982), that, slim as it may be, there is still some (prepositional) meaning to *to* (Duffley 1992a). We will explore this question in more detail in the next chapter. This interest in the history of the English infinitive is prompted by the fact that it can be thought of as the prototypical face of the verb, that first brings out the notion of event, and so, if the representation of event time has indeed changed in English, there is a good chance that the infinitive was somehow involved.

3.8   Development of the progressive

One of the particularities of the English simple form is its present-day inability to express events in progress, events which began before the point of time reference and may evolve afterwards, in which change is still possible without affecting the lexical meaning of the verb. For example, in German one can say 'es regnet' (literally, "it rains") to express an event going on at the present moment. In English, this phrase would be used to express a normal state of affairs, something constant: "It rains a lot in these parts." The same use of the simple present can be found in "The earth revolves around the sun," that is, the event is closer to a state: nothing changes as long as the event lasts. To express a progressing event Modern English uses a peculiar construct, the aptly-named *progressive form*: "It is raining." But whence does it come, historically?

This inaptitude of the simple form could very well be the result of the Korrel shift,

as this change in the representation of δ transformed event time from partly accomplished to all-to-come. Amongst the problems the history of the progressive carries are those related to the coming-to-be of the *-ing*. The current form of the present participle has a strange history involving the OE present participle, the deverbal noun in *-ung* and the inflected infinitive.

3.9   Development of *Do*-support

The central role played in the verb system by the auxiliary *do* is, many would agree, one of the most preeminent features of present-day English. *Do* behaves as the support for negation and interrogation of non-auxiliary verbs and is used as a mark of emphasis and anaphoric ellipsis. (These features have been known, since Huddleston (1976: 333), as NICE properties: direct Negation, Inversion in questions, Code — post-verbal ellipsis — and Emphasis).

As Denison tells us (1993: 255), "At the Old English stage there would be little justification for calling DON an auxiliary verb." The first two NICE properties were at the time common to all verbs. Its use in post-verbal ellipsis could be furthermore compared to the French *faire* which can hardly be called auxiliary.

So, although *do* was present in OE as a full verb, the question remains as to how, and why, it became the all-important 'operator' (Quirk *et al.* 1985: §2.48-9, 3.21-8) it is in today's English. It is safe to assume that the change in the representation of the instant of duration may have had something to do with this change in the behaviour not just of *do*, but of verbs in general — cf. the loss of inversion and direct negation. This change can hardly be the result of morphological constraints; it is more likely to have been caused by a change in the representation of the verb which no longer permitted behaviour such as inversion or direct negation. The *Korrel shift* might have had something to do with this since it radically changed the finite verb's representation.

3.10 Development of a separate Modal category

Yet another particularity of MnE vis-à-vis Middle and Old English, as well as German and Dutch, lies within the realm of modals (*can, may, will, shall, must*[6] and their past forms). These verbs exhibit many characteristics that are peculiar to them and no other English verb (except auxiliaries): no third person singular inflection, reduced semantic difference between present and past forms, the absence of *to* before the infinitive. They also differ from their German and Dutch counterparts (*cunnen,* etc.) in that no direct consecution of two modals can be used[7] due to an absence of quasi-nominal form (or subjunctive one, in many cases).

Historically, these verbs have always been somewhat set apart but until halfway through the ME period not so much as today. There are many aspects of their development which need to be looked at. But we can already say with certainty that the changes, contrary to what Lightfoot (1991: §6.2) claims, were the result of semantic transformation in the verb system. A possible link with the *Korrel shift* cannot be disregarded.

3.11 Disappearance of *gan*-periphrasis

ME periphrases formed by *gan* + infinitive are said to refer to the beginning of the action. For example, they were "incompatible with the adverbial adjunct *long*, which expresses duration" (CHEL II, 265). That they occurred almost exclusively in poetry could be due to the fact that the poetic language of the period is in a way less rigid than prose, and perhaps closer to the spoken tongue; then again, it could have become, early on, a simple rythmic device. Another interesting fact is that the periphrasis occurs — with the notable exception of *Pearl* — only in the past tense (CHEL II,

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[6]**Need** and **dare**, which can be considered modals in some of their uses, will also have to be discussed.

[7]except in some dialects.

266).

A possible link between this demise and the Korrel shift lies in the realm of the representation of the (beginning of the) event; it could be that the auxiliary had become incompatible with an all-virtual event.

3.12 Method

Space, time and data limit us in this study, and as linguists, we must learn to make concessions. Given the number of transformations English has undergone since the beginning of its recorded history, a choice has to be made as to which ones will be examined — i.e. which changes are more likely to be related to the shift in the representation of the duration of the event. By taking into account the comments made in §3.1, I have decided upon the following four changes: the spread of **to-infinitive**, the advent of the **progressive**, the rise of **do-support** and the evolution of the **modals**.

The reader will understand that any such choice has its share of arbitrariness (for example, why include the modals but not the demise of the *gan*-periphrasis ?) with which we most cope. And it will be understood that this thesis is not intended to be the final word on the diachronic study of the English verb.

3.12.1 Procedures

I will treat each of these four linguistic changes, one at a time, in sequence, taking time to delve into each before passing on to the next. The order in which these changes will be taken on (the infinitive, the progressive and then the auxiliaries) is important, as each step of this research will have a direct incidence on the following ones.

For example, in discussing the rise of the *to*-infinitive an assessment of the place of the V-*ing* form within the verb system of English will be necessary. There exists an opposition, in MnE, between the two verb forms and the role of each one will have to be determined in order to better evaluate the impact the *Korrel shift* may have had on their development. When we come to the analysis of the progressive, it will be useful to know more about the V-*ing*, to see more fully the morphological and semsyntactical features of *be* + V-*ing*. Furthermore, the reasons behind the *to*/bare infinitive alternations will have been examined before going to a discussion of *do* and of the modals, giving us a necessary tool for discovering why they refuse the mediation of *to* before the following verb. Also, knowing a little better what the progressive is about will help us determine more accurately why the modals are not found in this form.

Each chapter dealing with a specific historical change will begin with a brief statement of the problem and the various facts at our disposal: what is the current situation, what was it (or what did it seem to be) at earlier periods, what are the main steps of diachronic change that have been observed? This will be followed by an overview of landmark research on the subject, addressing their achievements and shortcomings.

We will then proceed with a fuller presentation of the geo-chronological data giving us a picture of the phenomenon in question. What (and how) do these data tell us of the point(s) of origin of the change? How did it eventually spread geographically?

The next, more theoretical, step will be to put forth a plausible link between the linguistico-historical events discussed and the *Korrel shift* and then try to discredit the hypothesis formulated. This part will require that we compare the timeframes and dialectal spread of the changes in question and delve into the wake of the shift. In order to have an idea of a dialectal correlation between the events discussed and the *Korrel shift* we will use — amongst other things — two texts already presented in

Chapter II: the *Cursor Mundi* and the *Cely Letters*. We will verify the usage of the authors who can be fairly categorized as either pre- or post-*Korrel shift* to see if it fits with our analysis. This procedure I have dubbed the "*Cursor* and the *Cely* test".

We know from Korrel what representational device has changed, and a threefold effect this change has brought about in the verb system of English (with regard to the use of the perfect). From these facts and more general principles — both of psychomechanics and other current semantically oriented theories — we can determine up to a point the various other effects this transformation would have had on the semantics (and pragmatics) of the English verb.

We will limit ourselves to a relatively small set of possible linguistic effects. For example, it has been argued (§ 3.8) that if English conceived of the moment of duration as not yet engaged, it cannot use a simple, non-auxiliarized form of the verb to express a event in progress, etc. Positing the post-*Korrel shift* conception of the moment of duration as the condition, we will try to establish a (limited) set of resultants.

We will then ask, at each stage, what relationships can be instituted between this phenomenon and the various other parts of the verb system? What seriousness can we attribute to these relationships? How do they fare according to epistemologic criteria like realism (cognitive, linguistic, etc.), falsifiability, simplicity (would there be a simpler explanation? Does this go against Occam's razor?) and, least but not last, elegance or esthetic rigor?

A conclusion to each chapter will return to the other authors having discussed the problem and focus on the similarities and *points de rapprochement* between the hypothesis formulated and their views. This will be followed a brief summary of the findings.

Part II

Analysis

En linguistique bien conduite existent: 1. le problème;
2. la solution en soi; 3. le moyen sémiologique de la
solution. S'en tenir à la seule explication extérieur
sans remonter aux problèmes profonds, c'est donner
des choses de langue une vue incomplète et irréelle.

Guillaume (1992: 154)

The following chapters will each deal with one of the historical changes which could be ascribed to the Korrel shift: the growth of the *to* infinitive, the rise of the progressive, of *do*-insertion and the definition of a separate modal class. Each chapter will begin with an overview of the problem, followed by a synchronic analysis of the form or usage involved. I will then review the diachronic analyses put foward by various linguists, after which the relevant data will be presented and discussed. All this having been laid out, I will dissect the evidence presented to try and offer a new appreciation of the historical factors involved.

Chapter 4

The infinitive

Introduction

When talking about the evolution of the English infinitive, there are other questions to answer than simply why *to* has become so attached to it. There are a number of facts to be accounted for during this evolution, like the use of other prepositions with the infinitive (from c1300[1] to c1500); the use of prepositions before the *to* + infinitive group (from c1200 onward); the decrease of the use of infinitive endings (starting in the North, from about the 12th to the 16th c.) and consequent disappearance of the inflected infinitive, etc.

It seems reasonable to posit some sort of correlation between these facts (maybe not all of them), a correlation which could point to a possible historical explanation of the phenomena observed. Furthermore, based on the evidence and analyses of Callaway, Kageyama, Duffley, Lightfoot and others — analyses which we will shortly present — it would seem reasonable to suggest that the OE infinitive did not have any particularly outstanding features with regard to other Germanic languages (or even French). Things started to be different at the end of the OE or beginning of the ME period. These various changes occurred for the most part in more Northern

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[1]From late OE in Northern regions

and then spread southward; this will have to be taken into account in the discussion of the problems.

4.1 The status of *to*

Before going any further, we do have to clear things up about this little piece of linguistica that is *to*. This will be necessary if we are to explain or justify its use in MnE.

4.1.1 The traditional view

If one subscribes to the view (expounded by Lightfoot (1979: 186 ff.) as well as many other grammarians) that *to* used before the infinitive only serves as a marker, then the development of the *to*-infinitive could be perceived as a simple morphological change from V-*en* to *to* V. This view implies a conception of *to* as purely formal and empty of prepositional meaning: *to* "has now come to be a mere empty grammatical appendix to the infinitive" (Jespersen 1940: 154); it is a morpheme that "can hardly be said to have a meaning in any independent sense" (Chomsky 1957: 100); "In modern English *to* is the bearer of tense features and is placed in T." or Infl. (van Gelderen 1992); it "functions syntactically like an auxiliary verb" (Mittwoch 1990: 122). Indeed, Kageyama discusses, for OE, the place of *to*: whether TENSE, COMP or AGR.

In a similar fashion, Denison (1993: 214) talks about "some apparent randomness in Middle English" as to the use of *to*, giving for partial evidence the following pair:

(1) & make hem to boyle togeder (Form Cury 2.76.4)

(2) & mak it boil

But such variation, still observable in MnE, is no doubt meaningful. Compare:

(3) When I was a child they made me <u>to</u> read word-daggers of quiver and scorn. (Hammill 1982: 96)

(4) When I was a child, they made me read word-daggers of quiver and scorn.

Example (1) could be paraphrased by "make it so that they will boil together", which cannot be said of (2). In a similar fashion, in (4) the speaker is (directly) forced to read, whereas in (3) he is placed in a situation (say, locked up all his youth in a library) where there will be nothing else for him to do but read.

In a footnote to his discussion of the Albanian 'infinitive', Joseph claims that an analysis of the Albanian PARTICLE + VERB construction as a preposition plus a participle "would complicate the syntax of prepositions, which otherwise govern only nouns and pronouns" (1983: 274 f.7). Apart from being evidently untrue — prepositions are found in many IE languages with infinitives and participles (*à, de, pour* and *sans* with the infinitive in French, any of a number of prepositions with the *-ing* participle in English, etc.) — this comment has the effect of sending readers on a wrong track. By this I mean that instead of trying to find out *why* prepositions are found with non finite verbs, the author simply denies this fact. The irony is that his monograph points to a tendency of adding what he calls "particles" (not knowing himself what they are) before infinitives losing their grip: *a* 'to' in Rumanian, *për të* 'for' or *me* 'with' in Albanian, etc. There is also the case of the genitive article *tou* in Greek.

Another point to take into consideration in a discussion of *to* as an infinitive marker is its place within the morpho-syntactic systems of the language. Is it a clitic or some sort of affix? 'Tense' markers in English are affixes (auxiliaries such as *be, have* or *will* are not tense markers as such, they are supporting verbs). An interesting test would be to apply the affix criteria laid out by Zwicky and Pullum (1983: 503-4) to *to*:

- "A. Clitics can exhibit a low degree of selection with respect to their hosts while

affixes exhibit a high degree of selection with respect to their stems": all verbs having a quasi-nominal/non-finite form can be found with *to*;

- "B. Arbitrary gaps in the set of combinations are more characteristic of affixed words than clitic groups" : there are no *arbitrary* gaps. Although *to* is not found with (modal) auxiliaries, this is presumably due to an important characteristic, yet to be defined however, of this particular class of English verbs. All other gaps can be accounted for through syntax, pragmatics or semantics;

- "C. Morphophonological idiosyncrasies are more characteristic of affixed words than of clitic groups": the existing 'morphophonological idiosyncrasies' we can observe in the use of *to* concern the governing verb and not the infinitive (for instance, *want to* becomes *wanna*, *going to* becomes *gonna*);

- "D. Semantic idiosyncrasies are more characteristic of affixed words than of clitic groups": no semantic idiosyncrasies can be found in the particulars of the MnE use of *to* with the infinitive.

The conclusion to be drawn from these criteria is that *to* could more easily be considered a clitic than an affix.

Interestingly enough, if one was to consider *to* as morphological — which is what people who claim it is a mere marker logically should be doing — it would have to be linked to the governing verb and be an affix (considering criteria A and C, and maybe B and D also).

The problem with the generally accepted view of *to* as a mere infinitive marker is that it fails to account for its absence between modal auxiliaries (amongst other verbs) and the infinitive. Furthermore, this view of things does not tell us why *to* is not always there after verbs such as *help.* or why one usually finds *how, where, when* and *what* with *to* but not *why*. All these facts point to a semantic reality for *to* greater than usually perceived.

4.1.2 Pullum

A very interesting point of view is in given Pullum (1982), who presents *to* not as a preposition, but as a verb devoid of any finite form. The argument he puts forth against its being an affix runs along the same line as those of Duffley 1992a (see below, 4.1.3). Furthermore, he invalidates the claim that *to* is a syncategorematic unit (a structure-imposed non-lexical item), an AUX, a complementizer or a Tense morpheme. However, his analysis against the prepositional nature of *to* leaves much to be desired. He gives the following ten arguments against it (191-194):

1. No other preposition takes uninflected VP's as complement;

2. Verbs that take PP complements with *to* do not *ipso facto* take *to*+VP;

3. Verbs that take *to*+VP complements do not *ipso facto* take a PP with *to*;

4. Modifiers specific to PP's, like *right* do not modify *to*+VP;

5. Modifiers of *to*+VP, such as adverbs, are not found with PP's with *to*;

6. Predicates that allow *to*+VP as subject do not *ipso facto* allow PP's with *to*;

7. The PP-*with*-NP construction (as in "To the transporter with him!") does not allow a *to*+VP instead of the PP;

8. It fails to account for the occurrence of *for-to* complements;

9. There is no contraction of the preposition *to* with *going*, whereas with *to*+VP, there is;

10. A stranded infinitival *to* cannot be stressed, whereas the prepositional one can.

The first seven arguments are simply a matter of the semantics of the verbs and of *to*. One cannot expect prepositions with a very particular meaning (*contra* Pullum's claim that they are meaningless in many contexts) to be used any which way

with any verb. It is not a question of the category to which *to* belongs but of the complementation (or θ-role) of the supporting or predicative verb.

The tenth argument, the impossibility of stress for a stranded "infinitival" *to*, is a very interesting one. One way we could counter it is this: *to* in collocation with the infinitive, as Duffley (1992a) argues, has its meaning taken to a more abstract level in a similar way to verbs when used as auxiliaries. And at the same time there seems to be a loss of "phonemicity", *i.e.* the word is less pronounced. It would therefore be difficult to stress it.

This brings us to argument number nine: the contraction of *to* with the verb *going* as in

(5)   I'm gonna do it now

There is a parallel we can make with French, where one can say

(6)   M'as partir demain.

       "I'm gonna leave tomorrow"

but not

(7)   *M'as à Montréal demain.

       "*I'm gonna Montreal tomorrow"

This seems to be due to the auxiliary use of *aller* in the first example, which is not the case for the second one. There is another parallel to be made, this time with an English construction. Compare:

(8)   Let us leave this place.

(9)   Let's leave this place.

The first sentence can be said either to the rest of the group the speaker is part of, or to someone holding them hostage. Only the first interpretation is possible with the second sentence. Is there a difference of meaning between the two *us*? In a (pragmatic) way, yes: it is either inclusive or exclusive of the person(s) spoken to. Is

there a difference of syntactic (or semantic) category? No: both are pronouns, both first person plural. The contraction argument is thus not so strong.

This leaves us with argument eight which is a problem we will be addressing during the diachronic study of the *to*-infinitive. But for now we can point to a possible solution: there are other cases of prepositions found before *to*, except that they all have been lexicalized together as time went by: *upto, onto, into*, etc. It could be argued that the first item of each pair is not a preposition but an adverb. Well, it could be also argued that *for* is not a preposition but something else.

As for Pullum's claim that *to* is a verb, as he himself says:

> None of the above arguments is compelling enough ... But it is important that while the seven points I have made could be argued to provide at least a little support for categorizing *to* as a verb, it seems that alternative categorizations receive no support at all. However small the degree of plausibility in my arguments might be, they are the only arguments in this domain that have any plausibility at all (1982: 205).

But he *does* furnish, while discussing his hypothesis of *to* as a verb, an argument for the prepositional analysis: the linear position. "One clearly established generalization about English constituent order is that in an X', the X (*i.e.* the head) is left-most" (198) and in the only reasonable constituent grouping of *to*+VP complements, *to* appears left-most of a constituent. "This argument would also count in favor of the view that infinitival *to* is a preposition". And Duffley gives several more reasons to take it as such.

Pullum rejects the main argument against counting *to* as a verb (because it has no tense), saying that other verbs show defective paradigms. But they are never defective to the point of having only an infinitive form. The idea of time (cf. Chap I) is at the heart of verbality and the possibility of having at least a minimal tense

(or mood) opposition is a prerequisite of verbs.[2]

All in all, an essay not convincing for *to* a verb and not a preposition, but good arguments against it being a mere infinitive marker.

4.1.3 Duffley

In one of the rare comprehensive corpus-based study of the alternation between bare and *to*-infinitives, Duffley (1992a) shows that things are not as many would have us believe they are, that *to* still behaves as a preposition before the Modern English infinitive as we can see in this series of (near-minimal) pairs. For one, *to* can be separated from its "object" by an adverb, as in:

(10) *To* boldly go where no man has gone before.

(11) *By* boldly going where no man had gone before they have conquered new frontiers for mankind.

which is not usually the case with morphological particles (cf. also Pullum 1982). It can also be found 'stranded' at the end of a sentence, like other prepositions:

(12) I wanted *to* go and they also wanted *to*.

(13) I got *on* the bus and then they got *on*.

What is more, Duffley argues, the meaning of *to* is basically the same — albeit taken to a more abstract level — as in the prepositional uses: both imply a movement between two positions. In the case of the verb the movement, more abstract, marks the non-coincidence between the infinitive and the preceding verb. Hence the difference between:

(14) I had seven people call.

(15) I had seven people *to* call.

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[2]We will discuss the absence of quasi-nominal forms in the modal auxiliaries in Chapter 7.

In (14), the *having* and the *calling* are coincident, they happen all at once, which is not the case in (15) where the having comes <u>before</u> the *calling*. I refer the reader to Duffley's monograph for a more thorough and articulate argumentation of this analysis. This view of *to* is supported by other linguistic studies.

> Another recent innovation is the use of *to* as what might be called a pro-infinitive (...): 'Will you play?' 'Yes, I intend to.' This is one among several indications that the linguistic instinct now takes *to* to belong to the preceding verb rather than to the infinitive, a fact which, together with other circumstances, serves to explain the phenomenon usually mistermed 'the split infinitive.' This name is bad because we have many infinitives without /it to, as 'I made him go.' *To* therefore is no more an essential part of an infinitive than the definite article is an essential part of a nominative, and no one would think of calling 'the good man' a split nominative (Jespersen 1982: 197).

See also Ohlander (1941–42) and Warner (1982: 129-32), amongst others.

Some problems arise, however, in Duffley's analysis, especially concerning the subjective use of the infinitive. Within the same framework as Duffley's, Guillaume (1984b) and in the case of the English verb system Hirtle (1975: 20-1) argue that the infinitive is the prospective, virtual form of the verb. If this is so, why should English bring in a preposition (*to*) that renders the infinitive prospective? For Duffley, the subjective infinitive with *to* gives "an expression of a contingent occurrence;" it has, in contrast to the *-ing*, "an aura of 'iffiness' which brings to mind the possibility that this event might well not have occurred" (1992a: 128). He explains it in this way:

> To represent a happening as unforeseeable, however — and herein lies the explanation for the use of the infinitive with *to* — one must necessarily evoke a position before its occurrence: the stretch of time leading up to it must be evoked as containing no prior indication that it was going to occur (1992a: 129).

The infinitive with *to* can also be used to express the actualization of this contingent event (1992a: 130). It is opposed to the (rare) use of a bare infinitive as subject, as in

(16)   I *say* anything disrespectful of Dr Keen? Heaven forbid!

(17)   Colonel Brandon *give* me a living! Can it be possible?

which are, as Jespersen points out, are exclamations "in which an idea is brushed aside as impossible by means of an (exaggerated) interrogative intonation" (1940: 328). There is no (expressed) possibility of actualization in these cases, as opposed to the contigent nature of the infinitive with *to*.

We can safely conclude from this study, as well as from Pullum's arguments, that instead of being a mere tense-marker, *to* introduces something probably akin to a distance between the finite verb's event and the infinitive's. Its evolution is nevertheless linked with the decline of the infinitival inflection, which had started in the 14th century and was over by the end of the 15th (CHEL II: 99).

4.1.4   The status of the inflected infinitive

According to Kageyama, in OE "*to*-infinitives, also called 'inflected infinitives', are characterized by the prepositional infinitive marker *to* and a dative inflection *-ne* added to a bare infinitive verb" (1992: 95). Callaway adds that "occasionally the *to* is followed by an infinitive in *-an* ...Very rarely, too, we have the *-anne* infinitive not preceded by *to*" (1913: 2).

Surveying the evidence given by Callaway, Visser,[3] Kageyama, Mitchell, Lightfoot, and others, one can see that this 'inflected infinitive' appears to have the same relative distribution as French infinitives preceded by prepositions (especially *à* and *de* which

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[3] Concerning these sources, we have to be critical of the examples given, as it has been recognized (by Mitchell and Lightfoot, amongst others) that certain misquotes seem to pepper their works.

are semantically quite close to *to*[4]) for examples, see section 4.3.3. In Old and Modern English, the only preposition occurring before the infinitive seems to be *to*. There is however a notable instance, in OE, of what may be an infinitive with *mid*:

(18) he wæs geornful *mid teolone* his singalra gebeda (*Wærf.* 71.11)

   (= continuæ orationis *studio*)

of which Callaway says that "one is tempted to consider *teolone* an inflected infinitive that has lost its *to* and that is the object of the preposition *mid*. But more probably *teolone* is a noun, though I do not find it so recorded in the dictionaries" (1913: 78). Callaway's analysis is a bit suspicious, though; he seems to consider *teolone* a noun for the sole reason that he cannot see it as a verb in this context.[5]

In ME, on the other hand, other prepositions (*till*, *æt*, etc.) clearly appear both before the bare infinitive and before the *to*-infinitive (see below, §4.3). For Kageyama OE *to*-infinitives "have the appearance of a 'word' rather than a phrase" (1992: 95) and this, for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is not possible, in OE, to have 'split infinitives': the speaker cannot introduce a syntactic element between the preposition and the verb. The second point is that one cannot 'strand' the preposition at the end of a clause, as in (12). The question one must ask, however, is whether one could, in OE, do so with other prepositions, as in (13). The answer is, very rarely, as Lightfoot tells us.

Kageyama's third criterion is that in sentences such as

(19) On oðre wisan sint to manianne wereas, on oðre wif. (C.P. 179, 15)

   'Men are to be admonished in one way, women in another'

"*sint to manianne* must be looked upon as a verb unit" (Kageyama 1992: 98), which is not much of a proof either, the point not being further argued for. Furthermore, that it is impossible to have *to* without the dative inflection (when it was still around)

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[4]One represents a movement towards, specifying the goal, the other specifies the starting point.

[5]There are also three examples of FOR plus inflected infinitive: BL.HOM. 189.30 (from Callaway 1913: 73), and CHRON 256 and 1127 E.

tends to reinforce the view that *to* was — at that time as it is now — a preposition marking a movement between the two things.

The decline of the inflected infinitive is the result of the fall of nominal cases, combined with the re-analysis of the English verb which became much less semiologically productive. But as the infinitive ending disappeared something else began to appear, if only for a short while: other prepositions began to be used before the *to*-infinitive cluster,[6] (see below, § 4.3.3). These began to decline rapidly however, to become very rare (again, according to Lightfoot) by the end of the 16th century.[7] A legitimate question would be, how can this be if *to* is still a preposition? Well, one can draw a parallel with MnE phrasal verbs; the semantic combination of the verb with a postposed particle like *up, out,* etc., creates a new lexical entity, which is probably also true, to a point, of *to* infinitives. *To die,* for instance, becomes a verb expressing not only dying but also a movement towards the dying, and so it is conceivable that for a certain period one could collocate it with another preposition in order to enhance the relation between the infinitive and the governing verb. Callaway has this interesting comment on the difference between bare and *to* infinitives: "it will generally be allowed, I think, that in *He will sing the song, sing* is more verbal than *to sing* in *He wished to sing the song*" (1913: 2). Another argument is that, as has been said (4.1.2), *to* has always had the capacity to be preceded by a preposition (or adverb). That *for to* was most often seen as two separate words, whereas *into, onto, upto* are found mostly spelled as one, cannot be used as argument against this analysis since in ME we most often find these as two words.

The prepositions preceding *to* lend a more precise meaning to it without taking away the basic movement meaning. In fact, the most frequent one, *for,* reinforces the purposive meaning, the idea of going for a goal.

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[6]Lightfoot dates the first occurrence of *for to* plus infinitive to 1205; Mustanoja however places it in the years of the Conquest, 1066: "Godes gerichtten *for to setten*" (cf. Mustanoja 1960: 514). But as has been said there are also the three instances from OE.

[7]*For to* + infinitive is still used in some parts of the English-speaking world, cf. Carroll 1982.

4.1.5 Changes in the infinitive

A substantial part of Lightfoot's work in the past twenty years has touched upon the evolution of the English infinitive. According to him (1979: 189ff.), the *(for) to* infinitive had, by the beginning of the ME period, the status of an NP and answered to the following properties ascribed to NPs (1979: 190): they take (in OE) the case endings of nouns; they take adnominal modifiers in the form of adjectives, articles and demonstratives, or possessives; they can be preceded by prepositions; they occur in passive constructions and in cleft constructions. But soon the following changes occurred which transformed the infinitive with *to* into a VP:

- rise of [for NP to V ...];

- obsolescence of [for to V ...];

- obsolescence of [P to V ...];

- obsolescence of infinitives in passives;

- obsolescence of infinitives in clefts;

- obsolescence of inflectional endings (*-enne*) on infinitives.

These changes had all taken place by the sixteenth century.

> Infinitives in passive and cleft constructions are dead by the sixteenth century,[8] and the last *-enne* inflection finally disappeared at the same time, after withering slowly since ME. These dates seem to be relatively clean, when one bears in mind that we are dealing with data from many different dialects and literary styles. The uniformity of the dates is striking: all the crucial nominal properties of the *to* infinitive are lost simultaneously. The conclusion should be obvious by now: we have here another case of an abstract re-analysis. Postulating a single

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[8]Forms as these are still found in Mod.Fr. and should be investigated in order to have a clearer view of the difference between the two verb systems.

initial structure change enables us to account for the striking simultaneity of the changes listed (1979: 194).

Fischer and Leek (1981) challenge part of this analysis, arguing that for one thing the time-frame is not, according to the data given by Lightfoot himself, as clear as the author makes it out to be.[9] Another point in their counter-analysis is that the parallel made by Lightfoot between [for to V...] and nouns also apply, in MnE, to *to*-infinitives.

Lightfoot also discusses the 'rise' of the *to*-infinitive as the inflectional system is collapsing in English:

> As inflections were lost generally, so we find the inflected infinitive replaced by two competing forms, the bare infinitive and the *to* form, there being a transitional period with forms such as *to singan* and *to singenne*. The use of the *to* preposition to form the new infinitive is alone good evidence for its NP-hood. The NP properties were carried over, and in its early history the *to* infinitive had precisely the same distribution as the earlier inflected form. However, after the development of the *to* form, *to* lost its early prepositional force and came to be seen as a mere 'sandhi form' (1979: 195).

It is however clearly not the case that there was "replacement by two competing forms" since the inflected infinitive was exclusively used with the preposition *to*. And as Lightfoot himself points out, the *to*-infinitive has the same distribution as the OE inflected form had.

The 'explanation' put forward by Lightfoot in 1979 was the following: "in the sixteenth century a series of changes takes place, all of which follow from saying that there was a category reanalysis whereby *to* infinitives lost their NP status. Viewed in

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[9]Lightfoot (1981) replies to these criticisms by saying that one will always find diachronic variations as different dialects and idiolects are involved and may change at different rates.

this way, the change can be seen as another consequence of the Transparency Principle" (1979: 195). This somewhat circular explanation[10] is also challenged by Fischer and Leek (and by Romaine (1981)) who claim, quite rightly, that there has been not much change in the absence or presence of a so-called NP status for the *to*-infinitives since Middle English. Lightfoot revised this analysis in his 1991 monograph, pointing to some shortcomings of his earlier attempt. After some discussion of problems concerning the rise of infinitival constructions like

(20) you expect Jim to win

and the replacement of 'active' infinitive by passive forms, he concludes that "the infinitival *to* came to transmit the head-government and case-marking properties of its governing verb; this was the analysis adopted by children with verb-complement order..." (1991: 96).

There is much to be said about the intuition behind his analysis, once the theoretical frame has been lifted a bit, and we will return more fully to it shortly. But for now we can point out that, as Lightfoot is in this book preoccupied mainly with the acquisitional problem, he fails to address the problem of dialectal spread — even if it is only used as a way to provide the analysis with a reference point.

Other factors have to be taken into account, for one, the different 'substitutes' developing in OE for the infinitive, especially the present participle nominative after verbs of motion (*com fleogan* → *com fleogende*) and accusative "with accusative subjects after verbs of sense perceptions, etc." (Callaway 1913: 272). We will return to this particular question later (§4.3.4).

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[10]The reader will have to admit that when one delves a little bit into Lightfoot's Transparency Principle and the changes he describes, one can easily paraphrase the hypothesis thus: "changes occur in how people speak so the grammar changes accordingly." The historical change is not explained since what is discussed is a hypothetical change in the grammar following the historical change.

A legitimate question to ask, one that is rarely brought up, would be, how did the loss of inflection affect the verb, especially the infinitive? And why did it occur at all, why did the English infinitive become semiologically a simple verb stem? It is not unrealistic to say that when *-en* was taken out of the infinitive, something else was lost, that something in the realization of the infinitive event changed.

4.2 The story of *-ing*

There is an important point to address in discussing the evolution of the English infinitive, and that is its relation to the *-ing* form of the verb. One or two things are clear and can be readily given: the *-ing* in MnE has both a nominal character and verbal regimen, being modifiable by articles, adverbs, complements, adjectives, etc.; it can often be opposed to the infinitive ("To cross the street takes time", "Crossing the street takes time").

We have to discuss this *-ing* and its evolution in order to see how it could have affected the use of the infinitive. According to the distribution of usage as well as meaning, the MnE infinitive is very closely related to the *-ing* form. In fact, the *to*-infinitive is more often opposed to the *-ing* than to the bare infinitive. And so we delve into *-ing*.

4.2.1 Phonological

There are three important phonological changes in the history of the MnE form V-*ing*: a shift from *-ung* to *-ing*, a change from *-end* to *ind*, and then to *ing*.

The first one concerns the OE deverbal noun; in the earliest English texts, the deverbal noun is made up of the verb stem and the suffix *ung* or *ing*, as in *liornung*,

spilling. These are nouns *formed* from the verb,[11] much like their German counterparts (*Bildung*) and not the equivalent of gerunds (see below, 4.2.2).

Later on, however, these nouns begin to be formed more and more by the suffix *ing.* This change seemed to have occurred around the turn of the millenium: "Il a fallu qu'en moyen-anglais précoce la formation des noms abstraits en *-ing* — peut-être sous l'influence scandinave — l'emporte sur celle en *-ung*" (Mossé 1957: 166).

> Already in l.O.E. the suffix in *-ing-* for various reasons was often substituted for that in *-ung-.* ...In e. Mid. E. *-ing-* is practically the only suffix, for it is most likely that in the 12th and 13th c. *-ung-* words of some Southern texts, *-u-* has no longer the phonetic value of /u/ but represents a vowel of indistinct quality (Langenhove 1925: 37).

The present participle on the other hand was subject to two phonological changes. The first one involved the vowel which shifted from *-e-* to *-i-*: "passage du morphème de participe présent de *-end* à *-ind* dans le Sud de l'Angleterre au début du moyen-anglais. C'est de cette 'iotisation' que découlerait toute la suite" (Mossé 1957: 174).

The second transformation is that of the suffix turning from *-ind* to *-ing*: "the present participle, whose original suffix in *-ende* (later *-inde*) was changed into *-ing(e)* first of all in some Southern dialects ...and then from there gradually spread over the Midlands to the North" (Einenkel 1914, in Callaway 1928: 33). This phonological process is by no means uncommon:

> I distinctly remember the contortions that some untrained pupils of mine in an English school had to make their mouths undergo, when they had to pronounce 'je demande, tu demandes,' etc. The words invariably became *je demangde, tu demangdes, nous demángdons*, etc., no doubt in all respects a fit analogue (Logeman 1938: 120-21).

(see also Lagenhove 1925: Ch. 2; Mossé 1952: II: §§ 174ff.)

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[11]One could specify a WFS of the type $[\text{Xen}]_v \leftrightarrow [\text{Xung}]_n$.

4.2.2 Semsyntactical

The main transformation to be observed, on the part of both the present participle and the deverbal noun, is the rise of verbal regimen for, as Callaway tells us, "in the Germanic languages originally the present participle had not the power of governing an object in construction, this idiom occurring, as a rule, only when translating an accusative-governed word in the foreign original (Greek or Latin)" (1928: 45).

When it is first encountered in OE texts, V-*ung/ing* is a simple deverbal noun much like it has remained in modern German (e.g. *die Zeitung*). It apparently has in OE, no verbal force whatsoever:

(21) ond eac ða speow ægðer ge mid wige ge mid wæron ægðer ge ymb lare

ge ymb *liornung*, ge ymb ealle ða ðiowotdomas ðe hie Gode don scoldon;

(*Cura Pastoralis*, 10-12, in Whitelock 1967: 5)

"and everyone in the divine order, how eager they were both about the

lore and the learning, and about all the services that they should do

for God

The impossibility of accusative government in the OE deverbal noun has been challenged, principally by Curme where compounds such as *godspell-bodunge* (what he calls "group-words') are concerned: "Aelfric sometimes rote [sic] the first member of his old group-words as a separate word, for he felt it as an accusativ [sic]" (1914: 492). But, as Callaway (1925: 36-41) clearly points outs, all of these come from translations or direct glosses from Latin originals. One is forced to agree with Mossé when he says that "Pour affirmer qu'en vieil-anglais le substantif en -*ung/-ing* est un nom verbal qui gouverne l'accusatif, il faudrait se fonder sur d'autres textes que des gloses. Or, comme je l'ai déjà écrit, 'on a beau fouiller la littérature vieil-anglaise proprement dite, on ne trouve pas cette construction' (*HFP* II § 171)" (1957: 161). It has furthermore been pointed out (Onions 1915; Callaway 1925) that the Latin gerund (the definition of which could be a deverbal noun with verbal regimen) is most often directly avoided by the translator or rendered by either an infinitive or

an abstract noun (Onions 1915: 169). If the *-ung* behaved in the same manner as a gerund, it would have been used more thoroughly.

If we agree with Mossé that "ce n'est que peu à peu que le participe présent d'abord (et en vieil-anglais), le nom verbal en *-ing* ensuite (et en moyen-anglais) ont acquis le pouvoir de gouverner un objet à l'accusatif" (1957: 162), we become answerable as to the cause of this transformation. According to Einenkel (1914), the acquisition of verbal rection by the participle was due to French influence, *via* the Anglo-Norman tongue, where the *-ant* present participle already had both nominal and verbal regimen (as did the Latin gerund).

But according to Callaway, at least, Anglo-Norman "was a significant factor not, as Dr. Einenkel holds, in the origin of the English gerund, but in the extension of that construction" (1925: 41ff.). His claim is that Latin is the source, through the translation and glosses Curme so much liked to quote. This, on the other hand, raises an interesting problem in that even considering the extent of both Christian religion and Roman law in Medieval England, the influence of Latin was not as great as some philologists would have us believe. For one thing, it is a fact acknowledged by historians that when Latin was reinstated (after the proliferation of vernacular languages) in the church during the Carolingean era, common folk stopped understanding what was being said during the services, even though they spoke, in what is now French territory at least, a tongue not so far removed from Latin (J.C. Poulin, personal communication). People might nevertheless have picked up Latin-influenced constructions when listening to homilies or sermons, but it is likely that such language would have rung strange, affected, in everyday speech.

If we consider the various factors (code-switching, substratal influenced, pidginization/creolization, social prestige, structural gaps, the possibility of a wider range of stylistic choices, intensive-extensive bilingualism, etc.) underlying structural borrowings from one language to another, we see that not many fit in the MnE picture.

Code-switching may have occurred in the English speakers of that period but no evidence remains asserting this state of affairs. There cannot have been a substratum influence from pre-conquest Latin, it being too far removed in time. Although English can in a way be considered a pidgin (of a few Germanic dialects), it is not really so *vis-à-vis* Latin. There was an undeniable social prestige associated with Latin, but there is no evidence to suggest that it was that widespread among the common people. As for the existence of a structural gap, and the possibility of a wider range of stylistic choices, if the English language could have taken care of this by itself, as I am trying to demonstrate, why should it have had recourse to borrowing?

The case of intensive-extensive bilingualism does not apply here, according to the definition given by Nadkarni:

> By 'extensive' bilingualism, I mean a situation in which bilingualism is co-extensive with the entire community, (...) By 'intensive' bilingualism, I mean a situation in which a community whose mother tongue is language A is not merely conversant with language B, but actually uses it for a wide range of purposes in the course of normal, everyday living. Extensive bilingualism, in particular, seems necessary for structural borrowing to be stabilized, since it renders all the members of the community more or less equally receptive to influences and traits of the non-native language — which, first randomly, and gradually more and more regularly, find their way into their mother tongue (1975: 681).

As I have stated, English-Latin bilingualism was not socially widespread, thus not "co-extensive with the entire community". What is more, we cannot consider that English speakers used Latin "for a wide range of purposes in the course of normal, everyday living." We are talking here of a mainly rural community; any contact with higher spheres of power would have been done *via* a lesser administrator speaking in the same tongue. Had this not been the case, Alfred would not have pushed for English translations of Papal and Imperial documents but would have had them

circulating in Latin. Instead he sent his bishops an English version of the *Cura Pastoralis*, complaining that so few were left in England that could "even translate a letter in Latin into English" (l. 17).

Einenkel's view that Anglo-Norman was an important factor, on the other hand, would seem reasonable, if it weren't for the fact that *to V-ende* constructions, where the present participle is taken to be an (inflected) infinitive (as in 'coman Crist *to wurðiende*', from Armstrong 1982: 200) occurred in late OE, before the Norman invasion. Even if these were all transliterations, which is quite probably the case, the question remains as to what they meant or represented.

4.2.3 The effect of the infinitive

Although it is often considered, especially from a phonological perspective, the role of the infinitive in the development of the English so-called gerund is most often side-tracked. It would be quite surprising if the *ing* had taken over some of the function of the OE infinitives purely through phonological processes. It is important to remember, and this is rarely considered in recent studies touching upon the history of the infinitive in English, that, to paraphrase Lightfoot, the OE infinitive is "replaced by two competing forms": the MnE infinitive (with or without *to*) and the *-ing* form.

(22)   Crossing the street can be dangerous

One would have used, in earlier stages of the language — as well as in German — an infinitive in this sentence. In his conclusions, Callaway observes that

> the nominative of the present participle came to be substituted for the predicative infinitive after verbs of motion (and occasionally of rest), *com fleogan* becoming *com fleogende*. (...) the predicative accusative of the present participle came to be used side by side with the predicative infinitive with accusative subject after verbs of perception, etc. (...) The substitution [in other Germanic

languages] of the predicate nominative of the present participle for the predicative infinitive was probably due to the same general causes as in Anglo-Saxon (1913: 272-3).

The same thing seems to have occurred in Tosk Albanian, where *të* plus the participle became equated to the infinitive (cf. Joseph 1983: 85ff).

It is quite obvious that something left the infinitive, probably during the ME period, which came to be in the 'possession' of the *ing* and the present participle.

4.2.4 How about summing up what we know?

We have a gerundization of the *-(u)ng* deverbal noun. One factor which seems to have played an important role in this process seems to be the gradual shift from mainly *-ung* deverbal nouns to mainly *-ing* nouns. This gave the deverbal noun a closer phonological resemblance to the infinitive; so close that they were sometimes confused (cf. Langenhove 1925: 3.4).

This can lead us to two different conclusions, however: we can say that the shift contributed to a confusion between deverbal noun and inflected infinitive (as Langenhove suggests) or we can argue that it indicates that there *was* such a confusion, and that this brought about the phonological *rapprochement*.

Synapsis

Firstly, we have to take into account that, for a phonological confusion to create a grammatical one, there has to be a *synapsis* (to use the term introduced, from biology, by Guillaume created (or already existing); there needs to be a (strong) semantic link between the two forms.

For instance, in colloquial Quebec French, the particle *-tu* can be added to a verb to form an interrogative sentence. By a confusion of this particle (which came from

-ti < -t-il) with the second person singular pronoun, some people have been heard to say *-vous* with a verb in plural concord ("Vous voulez-vous quelque chose?"). The pronouns being used in the same fashion (placed after the verb) for common interrogative clauses, the grammatical confusion was easy.

In OE, a strong semantic link can be observed between deverbal noun and infinitive, link which existed before the phonological change: both are concerned with the nominal realization of the verb. "This dual nature of the infinitive is manifested in the fact that in Anglo-Saxon the infinitive, both uninflected and inflected, of almost any transitive verb may at one and the same time perform the office both of a noun and of a verb." (Callaway 1913: 2). So, one can argue (more or less convincingly, I must admit) that the phonological change preceded the grammatical confusion, even prompted it. About it being or not the only factor, I reserve my judgement for later.

This synapsis led to the deverbal noun becoming more verbal, acquiring some of the particularities of the verb. This confusion seems to have reached its climax around the 12th or 13th century, just as the inflectional system was beginning to collapse and the infinitive was rapidly losing ground in favour of the present participle. The birth of the English gerund would then coincide with the demise of the infinitive ending. A similar process could be observed, it would seem, in some Romance languages; Joseph (1983: 250) speaks of "some dialects of Italian, spoken in the south of Italy, in which a formerly productive infinitive has come to be restricted in use and has given way to finite replacement" in a way similar to Rumanian (cf. Rohlfs 1958).

The lessening of the nominal force of the bare infinitive gave a greater place to the gerund. Even more as the present participle gained force against the infinitive.

Then a second change occurred, being the result of the gerundization of the *ing*. As I pointed out earlier, this process has brought the *-ing* closer to the present participle, so much so that there is only one thing still missing before they can be construed as one. Langenhove (1925) and Mossé (1938: Chap. 2) exhaustively talked of the

phonological changes which occurred during the ME period with regard to this verbal form. The most significant of these is the gradual lenification of the vowel of the present participle: what is written -*a/e/inde* has become /ənde/. Moreover, the final *e* no longer has to be pronounced, as rhyming pairs can show:

(23) Sche froted hir honden and hir *fet*

And crached hir visage, it bled *wete* (*Sir Orfeo*, 79-80)

"The process [of *e*-drop] seems to have been complete by c.1400, to judge from the spelling of the *Ireland* MS. and the meter of *The Destruction of Troy*" (Tolkien and Gordon 1925: xxi). They cite evidence from *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* where *fayne* (l. 840) and *payne* (l. 1042) rhyme with *Gawain, to graunte* (l. 1841) with *servaunt*, etc.

In the text of *Gawain* (Lancashire, c.1400), the distribution of -*y/ing* and -*ande* with regard to parts of speech shows that the -*ing* had not yet become the preferred form for the participle:

	Verb	Noun	Adj.	V.Adj.	Total
-*ande*	17	—	9	1	27
-*y/ing*	3	35	1	—	39

Table 4.1: Distribution of forms in *Gawain*

The three cases of verbal -*ing* are:

(24) And þerfore *sykyng* he sayde, 'I beseche þe, lorde, ...(l.753)

(25) 'Grant merci', quoþ Gawayn, and *gruchyng* he sayde ...(l.2126)

and

(26) þen brek þay þe balé, þe bowelez out token

Lystily for laucyng þe lere of þe knot;

þay gryped to þe gargulun, and grayþely departed (ll.1333-35)

which has a variant reading as a noun: "for laucyng".

The evidence in *Gawain* shows that that the scribe (and probably the poet) still made a distinction between the participle and the deverbal noun or gerund. It is thoght that the anonymous author, a well educated man who *de toute évidence* could read Latin and French, probably also wrote *Pearl, Patience* and *Purity.*[12]

A phonological reduction can be observed with the gerund, for instance in *Child Waters* (stanza 36) where "moaning" is transcribed *monand* in order to make it rhyme with *stand*:

(27)   And when he came to the stable-dore,

   Full still that hee did *stand*,

   That hee might heare now Faire Ellen,

   How shee made her *monand*.

Thus the distinction between the two differently written morphemes is no longer made on the phonological level. The orthography depends principally on the (con)text.

What does this tell us besides what phonological evolution took place? It shows quite clearly a confusion between the two morphemes. The mind perceives the close relation the two bear with each other and links them together. The verbal system is still in an evolutionary stage, and it encompasses these two into a new system. What was a hard opposition has now become a symmetrical dichotomy between temporal and spatial actualization movements of the infinitive verb.

In spoken language, the distinction seems no longer to be made between the two realizations, both being seen as V + [in].[13] Writing conventions are more resistant

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[12]The total distribution of the forms in the first two are as follows: for *-ande*, 24 verbs, 23 adjectives (verbal and otherwise) and no noun; for *-yng*, 17 nouns, 5 adjectives and only one verb: "I raxled, and fel in gret affray / And, *sykyng*, to myself I said, / 'Now al be to þat Prynces paye'." (*Pearl*).

[13]This is not exactly the case, as evidence from MnE shows. This will be discussed in the following chapter.

to change, so we still have writers having to consider which verb form is to be written. The scribe sometimes forgets the OE distinction between present participle and deverbal noun (or gerund), and adopts an orthography based on relative sound, as some texts show us, for the present participle. The -*ing* is phonologically more stable (examples such as that from *Child Water* are much rarer) and this is probably the main reason why it has remained the written form of the morpheme.

4.3 The data

This section is divided according to the various syntactic environments of the infinitive. We begin with the infinitive as subject, then as object, before going on with the infinitive with prepositions other than *to*, and prepositions before *to*+infinitive. Each part closes with a short analysis of the data given which will serve as the basis for a more global discussion in the following section.

4.3.1 The subjective infinitive

Callaway (1913) notes that verbs and *beoð* or *ðyncan* plus adjective groups found only with the inflected infinitive usually govern the accusative and that "even when not immediately modifying the adjective, but when used as the subject of a finite verb, the infinitive is by the indirect influence of the adjective attracted ... into the dative form" (1913: 20). The regimen of the finite group determines in the vast majority of cases the form of the infinitive, whether it is nominative/accusative (uninflected) or dative (inflected). "When we turn to the group of verbs having now the inflected and now the uninflected infinitive as the subject, we find that the group as a whole is true to the general principles already stated, with only two apparent, if not real, exceptions, *aliefan* and *lystan*..." (1913: 21).

Compare the following examples:

(28)   ðæh hwa cwæðe ðæt hyt *si betere to habbenne* for bearna gestreone (*Solil.* 36.8)

"Though one [may] say that it is better to have gained for the children"

(29)   *selre* ðe *bið* enegede *faran* to heofonan rice, ðonne mid twam eagum beon aworpen on ece susle. (*Napier's Ad. to Th.* 101.322)

"It is better [to] fare uneyed to heaven, than with two eyes be cast away in perpetual torment."

(30)   Him *gebyriað (sic!)* V æceres *to habbanne* (*Laws* 446, Rectitudines, c.3 § 3)

"It is fitting for him 5 fields to have"

(31)   ac hit ne *fremede* him swa *gedon.* (*ÆCHom* I.394)

"But it does not benefit him so [to] do."

(32)   ðæt heora ælc wite, hwæt him mid rihte *gebyrige to donne.* (Ib. 477, Episcopus, c.2)

"That their every punishment with right(eousness) is fitting for him to do."

It can very well be argued that there is, in (30) and (32), the impression that the two actions are concomitant. The main point to be noted however is that none of the examples found by Callaway have the infinitive in (real) subject position. They all are complements of impersonal verbs. That they are the logical subject — which may or not be the case depending on what the verb *really* meant, not what we make them to mean — is, to a point, irrelevant to the discussion at hand. It has been observed by many historians of the language that the infinitive as subject in OE was quasi nonexistent (see below, 4.4.2).

4.3.2   The objective infinitive

Callaway's findings on the use of the infinitive as object of verbs corroborates what he points out concerning the subjective use, *i.e.* that the choice between bare and *to*

infinitive results from the regimen of the governing verb.

The uninflected objective infinitive of OE, Callaway (1913: 61) points out, "in most instances appears to the modern Englishman as a direct (accusative) object, and doubtless so appeared to the Anglo-Saxon, for it occurs usually with verbs having the direct object in the accusative" whereas the inflected form usually appears as the "indirect object". There are, of course, exceptions to this general observation, but these all seem to obey the rules set down by Duffley, *i.e.* the inflected (*to*) infinitive represents an event coming after that of the governing verb. Furthermore, it is difficult to say, from a vantage point more than a thousand years removed, what the regimen of particular verbs really entailed. Can we really grasp the difference between

(33)   ða *het* he heora æghwylcum gesomnian his byrþene wyrta (*Greg.Dial.*, 14.202.13)

"then commanded he of them each to gather his bundle of herbs"

where the complement (*heora æghwylcum*) is in dative form, and

(34)   se cing *het* hi feothan agien Pihtas (*Chron.* 12, 449A)

"the king commanded them to fight against the Picts"

where the complement (*hi*) is an accusative? There is probably a subtle difference, maybe pragmatically negligible but nevertheless present, between these two as there is between (3) and (4) above.

(35)   ða seo cwen *bebead* cræftum getyde sundor *asecean*. (*El.* 1018)

"Then she, the Queen, commanded seek the craft asunder"

(36)   he *bebead* ðone hlaford *lufian* swa hine. (*Laws* 46, Ælfred, Intr., c.49, §7)

"he commanded the lords [to] live like him"

(37) ðis sindan ða domas ðe se . . . God self sprecende wæs to Moyse 7 him *bebead to healdanne.* (*Laws* 42, Ælfred, Intr., c.49ᵃ)

"these are the laws that God himself spoke to Moses and him commanded to uphold."

(38) Ge beoð mine frynd, gif ge wyrcende beoð ða ðincg ðe ic *bebeode* eow *to gehealdenne.* (*ÆCHom* II, 316)

"You are my friend if you are working the things that I bade you to uphold"

(39) beheold ðone heort and wundrode his micelnysse and *ablan* his *æhtan.* (*ÆLS* XXX.39)

"beheld the heart and wondered [at] his greatness and desisted from persecuting [of] him."

(40) he ... ne *ablinð to asendenne* bydelas and lareowas to lærenne his folc. (*ÆCHom.* II.74ᵗ)

"he does not cease to send forth preachers and teachers to teach his folk."

(41) Ic bidde ðe ðæ ðu ne *geswice gebiddan* me ðæt ic mote findan etc. (*ÆLS* XXXIII.206)

"I bid [command] you that you not stop commanding me that I find [strive for] counsel"

(42) se fæder ne *geswac* hine *to biddenne* mid wope. (*ÆLS* XXXI.497)

"The Father does not stop to worship him with weeping"

This data points to a use, in OE, of *to* infinitives which is compatible with that of *to* plus nouns: an oblique, datival relation between the infinitive event and the object. That the infinitive does not occur in other cases than the Nomimative/Accusative and Dative singular indicates that it could not, in OE, be thought of as a full-fledged noun (with plural and genitive cases) but that, paradoxically perhaps, it still relied on a nominal "realization mode."

4.3.3 Uses with other prepositions

An interesting fact — at least from the point of view of a native French speaker — is that the Old English infinitive could not be used with prepositions other than *to*. *From* and *of* are excluded since they require the genitive (or plural); but why do we not find *with/without, by* (dative/instrumental) or *for* with the infinitive?

Well, we sometimes, albeit very rarely, do find some of them:

(43)   he wæs geornful *mid teolone* his singalra gebeda (*Wærf.* 71.11)

Note that this is a translation. As has been discussed earlier, Callaway's analysis of this occurrence is that it is more probable that *teolone* is a noun (not recorded in the dictionaries) than "an inflected infinitive that has lost its *to* and that is the object of the preposition *mid*." (1913: 78).

In Middle English, this state of affairs begins to be more common (these examples come mostly from Lightfoot 1979:192–3 and Visser 1973: §897):

(44)   þo þe [h]er doð eni god *for habben* godes are (c.1250)

(45)   *for castyn* on the see: Drynke þe juce ... or þat þou comyst to þe see (c1450)

(46)   thou shalt not take the sister of thi Wijf *into liggyn* bi hir (1382)

There is the possibility here that 'liggyn' could be a gerund misspelled.

(47)   it came into my head, that she might ... be drawn *into lie* with some of that coarse cursed kind and be with child (1724)

(48)   pine ðe seluen for his luue ðe ðolede pine for ðe anon to ðe deaðe *on fasten* and *on wacchen*, an *on* ðine awene Wille *to laten* (c1200)

(49)   þe hondes gonnen *at erne* (c1300, King Horn (Ld.) 906; Hrl.: 'to fleon')

(50)   Ynouȝ þai hadde *at ete* (c1300, Tristrem 543)

(51)   ðus·sal he com doun *at sitte* þare To deme al þe world (c1400, Prick
       Consc. 5233)

(52)   þai ah *at dreȝe* þaire penance wid reuþe of herte (Ben.Rule (North.
       Prose Vers.) 21, 28)

(53)   Huer wiltu ðæt we gearuige ðe *till eottanne* Eastro? (Lindisf.Gosp.,
       Mt.26,17; Rushw. 'to etanne', Lat. 'ubi vis paremus tibi comedere
       Pascha?')

(54)   Thane, þare gret sorow *til ames*, Petyre þame tald how It was Hapnyt
       (c1375, Sc.Leg.Saints, 519)

(55)   now aught I sore *till irke*! (c1485 Digby Myst. (1882) IV, 1252)

(56)   Sen Nereus douchtir, Thetis, mycht ... Induce the *till enarme* hir son
       Achill (1513 Douglas, Æneis VIII,vii,31)

(57)   Godd hase sent fire of lufe þat es gude desyre and a grete will *vn-to
       plese* Hyme (c1340 Hampole, Prose Treatises (EETS) IX,32,30)

(58)   King Edward *vnto sail* was ful sune dight (Minot, Poems (ed. Hall)
       V,25)

(59)   þare come downe a aungell ... *Ynto comforthe* ihesu well still (c1400
       Northern Passion (Camb.MS, Gg 5,31) 461)

(60)   hym *vnto se* was terrible (c1475 Partenay 1272)

(61)   time approached ny *Vnto go* to bedde (idem 998)

(62)   He shold serche ... *vn-to know* whens he descendyd is (idem 113)

(63)   Any thing that I cane do *unto ples* ye (Cely Papers (Camd.) 203)

Visser (1973: §897) notes that "in Middle English, the prepositions *at, till* and
unto functioned in a similar way (*till* already in late Northern Old English and still
in Scots)" as *to*. That *till* seems to be used principally in the Northern regions could

come from the fact that, at least according to the *OED*, the use of this preposition is "due to [the] adoption of the O[ld] N[orse] word" (OED 2306).

Furthermore, the three prepositions used here all refer in some way to a movement towards something: *till* is a temporal counterpart of *to* (and is thus unsurprising in a verbal context); *at* represents the movement seen at its end, at the point of arrival and *unto* is a semantic variant of *to*, here also focusing on the destination.

The main point of analysis, for the use of infinitive with other prepositions, would be the question: Why did it begin when it did (c1200) and end when it did? That is, what are the reasons behind these two changes? In the case of the infinitive with *till*, the reason for the appearance is straightforward enough: the preposition was not current in the English language before a certain time. The reader will notice that in all the examples, the following verb begins with either a vowel or an /h/ which is still the case in Scots and in Northern dialects: *to* becomes *till* in these contexts.

The case of *unto* will be related to *for to*. As for *at*, the sense of 'motion towards' developed, according to the OED, in ME; this would explain its non-appearance with the infinitive in OE. It seems furthermore limited mostly to such verbs as *go, come* or *have*.

This leaves us with the following interrogation: why did it disappear? For one thing, it was never that common to start with. And competing forms — as these various prepositions were, in the context of the infinitive — have a way of evening out and a standard often arises in these situations, in this case *to*, which was already so pervasive. It had no limitation as to which inflected verb it could be governed by, and what phoneme could follow it (except, of course for the Scots).

Prepositions before *to*

(64)   forrþi mann læteþþ litell *off To wunndrenn* ohht tæronne (c1200)

In this example, one could argue that *off* is 'attached' to the preceding verb, as in 'he was paid off to keep quiet".

(65)   rædiȝ *till To wissenn* himm and lærenn (c1200)

(66)   and himm birrþ ȝeornenn aȝȝ þat an Hiss Drihhtin wel to cwemenn Wiþþ daȝȝsang and wiþþ uhhtennsang ... and *wiþþ to letenn* swingenn hemm þe bodiȝ (c1200)

(67)   ne i herd neuer ... in land Men sua hard *at to understand.* (14c)

(68)   Vyenne salewed parys *wythoute to make* ony semblaunce of Love (1485)

(69)   *in stede to healpe* hym to dye well, [he] putteth hym in vayne hope of long lyfe (1557)

(70)   they impeach him *of traiterously to have assumed* the regall power to himself (1678)

(71)   people ... called upon to conform to my taste, *instead of to read* something which is comfortable to theirs (1834)

(72)   not to affirm is a very different thing *from to deny* (1879)

As was the case with the infinitive used with other prepositions, there are two questions to be answered here. They are the same ones actually: why did the use of a preposition before *to* develop and why did it stop? This time, we'll tackle the second one first, by asking another question: did it really disappear? What I mean to say is this: is the possibility of using the *to*+infinitive collocation with other prepositions gone from the English language? Except for *for to*, all the other prepositions are somewhat rare. And the fact that we still can find some of these in writings from the last century seems to indicate that the potential has not been lost altogether. What seems to have happened is that the present participle in *ing* has taken over from the infinitive. In most of the cases of preposition+*to*+infinitive, the *to*+infinitive would be exchangeable with the *-ing*.

(73)   not affirming is a very different thing from denying

As to the case of *for*, it is still used today in some dialects of English:

(74)   Brother, my cup is empty and I haven't got a penny for to buy no more whisky. (Cave, "Brother, my cup is empty")

It is to be noted, however, that there is a dramatic decrease in the use of the infinitive with *for to* in the middle of the 15th century (cf. Lightfoot 1979); this might indicate an influence of the *Korrel shift*.

This brings us to the first question, why did the phenomenon start during the ME period (c1200)? This is in all probability due to the same factors as brought about the rise of the infinitive (with *to*) in subject position: *to*+V is taken as a complex entity capable of functioning as a noun which was not (fully) the case in OE.

4.4   The *raison d'être* of the MnE *to*-infinitive

The question remains still, why did the former inflected infinitive, in its modern *to*-infinitive form, become so dominant in English?

We know (from Korrel 1991 and Tessier 1989) that, in German and Dutch, δ of the event is conceived as actualized (Korrel 1991, 1993), that there is something coming before the virtual of the event time, which is not the case in English where the instant is construed as virtual. The infinitive, in both cases, is posited as the all-virtual form of the quasi-nominal mood.[14]

The difference between the two types of instant affects the relations of the finite verb event to the infinitive event however: in English they are (all-) coincident, which is not the case for Dutch or German. In these languages, a psychological distance exists, a difference of conceptual constitution of the event which usually allows for the finite verb event to antecede the infinitive (although German for instance sometimes

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[14]cf. Chap. I, §1.3.3

uses *zu* — *Ich muß gehen* vs *Ich brauche nicht* zu *gehen* when further movement is deemed necessary). English, not being so endowed, must have recourse to a distanciation process expressed by the preposition *to*. The use of *to* is then not a direct effect of the infinitive's conception or of the representation of δ in the finite verb, but rather of the relation between the two.

This explanation may seem rather simplistic, but consider the expressional demands bearing on the language. The representation of event time is constantly present as a factor in sentence construction, especially when two events are brought together. The English speaker who sees the event of a simple form as a virtual whole cannot collocate it with another event he conceives as coming afterwards (temporally or otherwise) without the intervention of a preposition to mark the distance.

In German, Dutch or even French, one often uses prepositions to mark the relation between two events and there are many verbs which, by virtue of their meaning (or, as others would say, through the θ-role they govern), demand certain prepositions to be used, for instance:

(75)   Ich glaube intelligent zu sein

"I believe I am intelligent (Lit.: I believe intelligent to be)"

The changes which occurred in English made it so that almost every verb requires *to*, the preposition which has from the earliest OE records been the companion of the infinitive.

4.4.1   The infinitive in NPs

Two features particular to the MnE infinitive should be kept in sight: first, *to* is often compulsory (except with certain verbs) when as 'subject' (as in "To be or not to be: that is the question."). Secondly, the infinitive is not used as often as it would be in German or Dutch in similar constructions, being replaced by the *-ing*. This use of the *to* infinitive as a subject indicates that the event preceding the infinitive need

not be expressed but that, in MnE, it is intrinsically conceived as all-virtual, hence automatically coincident with the infinitive event.

This seems to indicate that the infinitive is no longer capable of being used as a noun.[15] The question one could then ask is this: what does *to* give the infinitive (which it must have lost with the *Korrel shift* — or the loss of ending which may or may not have brought about the shift) to permit it to be used as a noun?[16]

4.4.2   A new analysis

Historical evidence from both English and French,[17] indicates that the infinitive in earlier stages of the language was closer to the noun than it is today. For one thing, it used to be inflected in relevant contexts: in English after *to* — a dative-governing preposition — as we have already seen. In French it could take a determiner:

(76)   Mes quant ce vint *au regarder* les renges de l'espee (*La Queste* (13th
      c.), 205: 14-6)

      "But when this came to the look the scabbard of the sword" (taken
      from Champagne 1993: 260)

be made plural:

(77)   plusieurs *allers* et plusieurs *revenirs* (quoted from Martin et Wilmet
      1980: 210)

or be modified by an adjective:

(78)   par trop legier *croire* et folle expérience (id.)

      "by too light belief and crazy experience"

And this, up to fairly recently, as Guillaume points out:

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[15]I do not mean by that that it cannot be made into a noun ("You talk the talk, but do you walk the walk?") in such instances a new word is created — and a determiner is I believe, *de rigueur.* Furthermore, this nominalization can occur after the *chronogenesis* of the verb, *i.e.* with a finite verb.

[16]*zu,* in German, does not do this with its infinitive.

[17]The rationale behind the parallel with French will become clearer as we go along.

> Au XVIIe siècle, Pascal dit encore, et au pluriel, ce qui accuse la valeur nominale: *les éternuers, les toussers, les marchers*; et La Fontaine: *le manger, le boire, le dormir*. Antérieurement, l'alternance est plus libre encore. Rabelais écrit: *Et lui souvint comment à son départir n'avait dit à dieu à la dame.*" (1992: 149).

In Old French, the infinitive could not even accept direct negation or clitic adjunction (cf. Champagne 1993: 259). But as time went by, it acquired more and more features of the verb, and lost some of the noun.

> De manière générale, les alternances dues à la position d'une forme sur la limite de deux systèmes [noun and verb] tendent, à l'usage, sous une expérimentation qui met définitivement les choses au point, à devenir de moins en moins fréquentes; et l'emploi nominal de l'infinitif est bien plus rare dans le français moderne que dans le français un peu plus ancien (Guillaume 1992: 149).

We no longer find instances of infinitives as nouns in French, except for lexicalized items (*savoir, manger*) and rare neologisms — often imagined by linguists (e.g., *le vouloir-dire*).

According to Guillaume, in Modern French, the infinitive is still not immediately (*i.e.* without mediation) predicative *per se*. To be so, it can make use of the preposition *de*. How does this compare to the situation of English? On the subject of the relation between Fr. *de* and English *to*, which he dubs the "permanent sign of the infinitive", Guillaume cautions us at length: "Le rapprochement tient en ce sens que dans les deux cas il s'agit des conséquences d'un fait de position systématique. Mais si l'on examine les choses dans leur réalité concrète, la différence s'accuse" (1992: 153). His position can be summed up in this manner. In both cases the consequence brought about by the use of the preposition is on systemic position. In English, however, the word representing, semantically, the verb without the support of *real*, as opposed to *memorial*, time would 'fall' into the plane of the noun. *To* is there to prevent the fall, so as to keep the infinitive value.

The English infinitive, which has no inflection, *contra* German, would fall, left to its own device, into the field of the noun. There would no longer be any infinitive. *To* puts the required distance between the plane of the noun and that of the verb. *To* does not play the same role as the French preposition *de*; it is much more general, a means of obtaining an infinitive incapable of morphological existence since in English morphological time includes only real time (past and present) and excludes possible time (future).

In French, *de* serves, not to create an infinitive, but to give it verbal use which the position within the system of the infinitive forbids. *To*, in English, answers a general problem of the language: the begetting of an infinitive. *De*, on the other hand, resolves a localized problem: the verbal use of the infinitive. "Avec *to* on crée l'infinitif. Avec *de* on en développe l'emploi" (1992: 154).

I beg to differ. For one thing, *to* is not always present. Furthermore, if, as Guillaume claims, without it the infinitive "falls" into the nominal plane, how is it that one cannot say **Be or not be, that is the question*? The fact is that the MnE infinitive has not only lost its (nominal) flection but also, it would seem, most (if not all) of its substantival nature. It cannot be used directly as either subject or object; in order to be so used, it requires the mediation of the *to*. Now the interesting fact is that the meaning of this preposition is the opposite of French *de* ('of, from'). *De* represents the origin of a (spatial, temporal, logical, etc.) movement, whereas *to* represents the end-point.

Recapping, in French (although this trope tends to be stylistically marked) the infinitive uses *de* to have verbal predication and in English, it needs *to* to be nominal. So, *to* appears because the infinitive, through a (common) historical tendency, lost its nominal force as represented semiologically by its inflection.[18] But what does this loss of nominal force entail, with regard to the representation of the event of the infinitive

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[18]I am thus in agreement, after a fashion, with the usual explanation.

(this *is*, after all, our main concern)?

A first question to ask is whether, according to the data we have, the infinitive with *to* was more frequent than without it in subject position during the OE/eME period. If with *to*, then what has (mostly) changed is the relationship between the inflected verb and the infinitive and we have already discussed the reasons behind this; if not, then the infinitive would have changed in itself. Of course, the first case would be easier to answer than the second, where there would be two (related) phenomena to consider: the change within the infinitive and its relationship with the support verb.

It is an interesting, and meaningful, fact that in OE the infinitive is very rarely used as subject, whether it is with or without recourse to *to*. More importantly, in the current matter of discussion, out of the two possibilities, when the infinitive does occur as subject it is with *to*:

> it was the *to*-infinitive rather than the plain infinitive that first developed a subject function. (...) This is made abundantly clear by the statistics provided by Bock [(1931)]. The plain infinitive only begins to occur as subject on analogy with the *to*-infinitive, and never acquired a very strong position there, except to a certain extent in poetry for metrical reasons (CHEL II: 334–5).

These facts point to two distinct phenomena: 1) the OE infinitive was not sufficiently nominalized to compete with deverbal nouns (such as the *-ung* or the *-eþ*); 2) it needed, always, the preposition *to* to be used as subject. This does not mean that the infinitive had to be preceded by *to* to have nominal force, but that the context of use of the infinitive called for the mediation of *to*, cf. Duffley's discussion of contingent events (4.1.3). For non-contingent events, events with no "aura of 'iffiness'," the deverbal noun was more useful than the prospective part of speech that is the infinitive without *to*.

The path to nominalization had already begun to be trodden by the end of the

OE period; the systematic use of morphological endings was beginning to collapse even before William "liberated" (as he no doubt would have said) the island. This, it can be easily observed, immediately excludes the *Korrel shift* as a possible source. But it is possible that there is a relation, an inverse relation from our starting point, which could lead us to a causative or influential factor bringing about this shift.

I will now very briefly since that is not really the purpose of this chapter — or thesis for that matter — try to sketch such a relation.

There is no division of time according to Guillaume (cf. Chap. I, §1.3.3) before one gets to the indicative; therefore, the infinitive could (probably) not be influenced by the way δ is conceived.[19] The fact that the present participle has taken over many of the functions of the infinitive would seem to indicate that their use is at least partly determined by δ. The present participle incorporates a part actualized and a part unactualized (cf. fig. 1.3), whereas the infinitive is all unactualized. On the other hand the participle has a nominal nature which the infinitive may no longer hold. The fact remains that *to* + infinitive has a nominal nature, since it can be used as subject (which entails that PP's have a nominal nature since they also can be used as subject, although in a much more limited way than the infinitive with *to*).

We would need to say that the nominal use of a verb is dependent on:

1. its capacity to be noun

2. its capacity to express an on-going event (which entails an actualized and an unactualized part)

To focuses on the endpoint of a movement. This implies that something has gone on (in space or time) before this point. If the infinitive with *to* is much present in subject position during the OE/eME period, one would have to explain why it was so, and correlate this with other Germanic languages. If it is the case that the *to*-infinitive

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[19]Unless there be an anticipatory influence.

was often used as subject before the *Korrel shift*, then we could not argue that *to* only nominalizes the infinitive, it must do something else.

In order to reinstate the nominative/on-going nature of the infinitive, English has made more extensive use of a feature already present in the language, namely the use of *to* before an infinitive. Before the *Korrel shift*, *to* was already used as the main intermediary between two verbs (for specific semantic reasons which we need not go into at this point). After a certain point in the history of the language, it was no longer possible to use an un-mediated infinitive in nominal context, hence the recourse to two different "repair" strategies, depending on the expressive demands: the infinitive with *to*,[20] in the case of more contingent events, or the *-ing*. Another change occurred which made it more difficult for V + infinitive to occur without mediation. This last change, it can be argued, is a result of the *Korrel shift* which placed the finite verb 'too close', as it were, to the infinitive in its representation of the event, creating a coincidence of the two events which often needs to be avoided.

The question one needs to ask is whether the two changes are related, or, to put it more boldly, are there really two changes, or is it just one with two faces?

It has to be recognized that the (late) ME infinitive does not have the same representational capabilities as its OE ancestor. In OE and eME, the infinitive is morphologically marked. It has a particular ending. Morphological affixes, such as endings, carry information. There is more information in the Latin *dominorum*, than in *master*. The Latin noun gives us its particulars of use. We know, in the above case, that it is not only plural, but also genitive (possessive). English words, on the other hand, are much more general, if not vague. It follows that as it lost its ending, the English infinitive lost something else and, from the data on its use, we should have no difficulty to see what has been left out of its representation.

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[20]As we have seen, the omnipresence of *to* is also the result of competing strategies having been won by a single one.

In his comparison of use between the infinitive with and without *to*, Duffley puts forth the idea that with *to* the infinitive is more distanced from the supporting verb or, in the case of the subjective use, has an aura of 'iffiness', because it sees the event from a point further away. The fact that in OE the mediation of *to* was much less necessary points to a distancing effect of the infinitive inflection. Even more, the loss of morphology affected not only the infinitive, but the whole of the English verb system. The subjunctive is often undistinguishable from the indicative (only with the verb *be* or in a third person singular present can we find a semiological distinction). This has the effect of collapsing, to a point, the chronothesis (Chap. I, §1.3.3) of the English verb, effectively reducing the differences between the different forms. Hence an infinitive that has to be pushed away from the support group.

All this is all very fine, but how does it bear inspection *vis-à-vis* the facts: is there a correlation between loss of infinitive ending and loss of unmediated nominal use?[21] Can the changes be analyzed cross-dialectically, *i.e.* how does it fare with the reference dialects?

Concerning the infinitive endings, we have very clear dialectal evidence pointing to a loss of the morphology in Northern dialects (cf. CHEL II: 207); this is concomitant with the rise in the use of *to* as a mediator between the infinitive and finite verbs (both progress from around 1250 to about 1480, cf. CHEL II: 96-100, Lightfoot 1979: 186ff.). As for the use of *to* with the infinitive in subject position, it has already been noted that this was already the preferred form in the (rare) OE instances found.

4.4.3 The Cursor and Cely test

A survey of four of the *Cursor Mundi* texts shows an interesting pattern: the Trinity MS tends to let go of prepositions. It often has *to* where the others have *for to* (e.g.,

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[21]One has to remember that, in the theoretical point of view adopted here, morphological changes *follow* psychological disregard, and not the other way around. So one has to expect a certain delay between the increase in mediated nominal use and the loss of infinitive morphology.

l. 6192), and nothing where the others have *to* (see also l. 5330).

(79)   Ne right wisdome þar-in *to deme* (*CursM* (Cott) 9542, Trin = *þeryne*
          deme)

This is very interesting since it is the Cotton MS, the reader will recall from Chapter II, that gives the more Dutch-like reading, from the point of view of the *Korrel shift*. Rarely does the Trinity MS vary concerning the present perfect and related forms from the Cotton and Göttingen MSS. It is in these respects a more conservative MS; and this agrees with its use of prepositions before the infinitive.

But there are other data of note: the Cotton MS shows an important use of the infinitive with *at* (see also ll. 5093, 5841, 6255):

(80)   Josep was wont *at weind* (*CursM* (Cott), 12543)

(81)   In mining þat es *at vnderstand* (*CursM* (Cott), 6175)
          "In mining that is to understand"

(82)   Yee send a man *at* hit *receiue* (*CursM* (Cott), 7746)
          "You send a man to receive it"

In the last two examples, *at* can also be found in the Fairfax MS. The other two MSS do not use this proposition. Fairfax sometimes uses *atte*, as in the following cases:

(83)   a litel stounde his word at here (*CursM* (Fair), 5330)
          "a little while his word to hear"

(84)   he biddis þe atte wende on-nane (*CursM* (Fair), 7995, Trin = *wend*)
          "he bids thee to wend anone"

(85)   If we finde any corne *atte selle* (*CursM* (Fair), 4936)

As mentioned above, *at* only acquires the meaning of 'motion towards' in the ME period (*dixit* OED); but it retains an important difference with *to*: whereas the latter implies something coming before, and a certain distance (which could be almost nothing), the former does not represent this distance. This explains why it could no longer be used after the *shift*: the preposition interceding between the inflected

verb and the infinitive, as we have said above, has to mark a distance. Hence the disappearance of *at* in this position. No example of it is found after the date of the *Korrel shift*. It is interesting to note that *at* is most often found with verbs whose meaning implies some sort of movement (*seek, send, go*, etc.). This is easily accounted for if we take into account that as movement is expressed in the supporting verb, it need not be expressed, in a *pre-shift* world, in the intermediary preposition which could only express the endpoint of that movement.

Concerning the use of *for to* before the infinitive, the *Cely test* shows this: the authors that are clearly *pre-shift*, such as Richard Cely the Elder, John Roosse or John Dalton, all make use of this combination,

(86)   I was at Geteryng feste ... for a mater that *I for to doe* there (Richard I; 2/10-11)

(87)   for the weche I wyll be glade *for to doe* for hym (Richard I; 11/22)

(88)   The man of Lyne ys good payment, and that ys mery *for to dele* wyt sych men (Richard I; 31/36-7)

       "...and it is pleasant to deal with such men."

(89)   you wolde that I sholde com to Breges to you *for to helpe* to conuey your haukys into Eynglond (J. Roosse; 63/2-3)

       "you would that I should come to you in Bruges in order to help convey your hawks into England"

(90)   prayng you *for do* so mvch for me noo at thys tyme (J. Dalton; 28/1-2)

       "praying you to do this much for me now at this time"

whereas the Cely children, including Richard who is clearly *post-shift*, never use it, except in the following case:

(91)   ewe ȝe thynke yt be beste so *for to do*, and ryed to Bregys to Thomas Kesten (Richard II; 8/10-11)

       "if you think it be best to do so, and ride to Bruges to T.K."

This could be taken as an example of either a fixed trope, or fatherly influence (we must remember that Richard the Younger shows evidence of diglossia).

These facts are in agreement with those of the *Cursor Mundi* presented above: that there is a decrease (if not disappearance) of the infinitive used with *for to* around the time of the shift.

If *to* was added to the infinitive in order to give it back nominal strength, by so doing, *i.e.* by adding a distance before the infinitive, the verbal event began to be perceived as having no actualized part (as it was the *to* which seemed, in the child's reanalysis of the English data, to be marking the accomplishment part).

Two 'repair strategies' were then used; the first one (from a chronological point of view) consisted of using *for* before the *to* + infinitive pair. The speaker conceives of the infinitive as too abstract, in and by itself, to be used without *to* in a majority of contexts. But in order to express a distance between the event of the inflected verb and that of a following infinitive he has to add another preposition: *for*, which marks movement towards a goal or purpose — more rarely, *un* (as in *unto*) is used, which reinforces the movement meaning of *to*.

Then comes about the second 'strategy': a shift that equates δ with the infinitive, giving it back some of its features of use. That is, *to* is once again seen as a way to mark distance (on top of its being the nominalizationer of the infinitive).

Conclusion

So, to sum up: (1) the *Korrel shift* is not responsible for the appearance of *for to*, *at* or the denominalization of the infinitive — in fact, it could very well result from the same causes as these; (2) the shift is responsible for the disappearance of *for to*, *at* and *unto* before the infinitive. The spread of these phenomena in both space and time concur.

Going back to Lightfoot's 1979 and 1991 analyses, we find that we are in partial agreement; some of the conclusions I have come to can be, *mutatis mutandis*, found in his view of the changes occurring, in ME, in the infinitive. The main point of *rapprochement* is that there was a first step, at the beginning of the period, in which the infinitive with the preposition *to* attached to it came to be conceived as a more cohesive unit than it is now, something in which the two parts formed a nominal complex. We are also in agreement in saying that this state of affairs came to an end around the 15th to 16th century.

As for the second change, the one I ascribe to the *Korrel shift*, Lightfoot sees it more as a matter of changes in the structure and nature of *to*, which acquires the capacity to "pass government" to the infinitive. In the analysis proposed here, the change affects primarily the inflected verb, which has to be distanced from the infinitive.

Chapter 5

The Progressive

Introduction

Modern English, with its *progressive* form, is something of a loner amongst Germanic languages past or present. Although the collocation of BE and the present participle has been possible at various periods of the history of German and can be found in other related languages as well, English is the only one to have instituted it as a regular productive syntactic process.

In this construction, the present participle represents an action or event in progress and relates it to the subject through the use of the auxiliary. The use of the progressive varies greatly, but there always remains the same underlying meaning. There is always a notion of imperfectivity in that the subject is placed in a event which is conceived as having already begun and which may go on after the point time reference (cf. Hirtle 1967: 22ff.). Such expressive effects as temporariness ("These days, I'm walking to work") and the like all take their roots in this notion of imperfectivity, this potential meaning of the progressive.

Historical research on this form has a long history in itself, and is often intertwined with that of the *ing*. As to its origin, opinions differ; some see it as a result of Latin

and/or French influence, others as a calque from Celtic and yet others as a purely native construct. In this chapter, we will examine the origin of the progressive and its *raison d'être* in Modern English and see if it can be the result of the change having occurred from $\delta(\omega)$ to $\delta(\alpha)$. We will begin as usual by looking at previous hypotheses concerning the origin; in the second section, the data from Old and Middle English will be presented and discussed — especially with regard to the fundamental question: is the collocation of *be* and the *-ing* a real progressive, in the MnE sense? After which time we shall revisit the previous analyses and present a new one which will then be discussed and confronted with the data presented.

5.1 The state of the question

Although there is much dissent amongst linguists concerning the history of the progressive in English, a few (nearly) undisputable facts can be extracted from the broth. There are many instances in OE of *beon* + the present participle (in *-ende*), most of which, however, are found in translations from Latin (where it is sometimes used to translate *esse* plus gerund constructions). At the beginning of the ME period, there is a noticeable decline in the frequency of the construction followed by a "comeback" in the form of *be* + V-*and(e)* or V-*ing* after the deverbal noun and the participle have fused together (orthographically, at least).

I have grouped the various studies on the origin and development of the English progressive into four sections most often named after the most recognized proponent of the different views. But there is a warning to be heeded, as Mossé himself points out:

> le problème est plus complexe, la phonétique, la syntaxe, l'influence de tour-
> nures étrangères ou parallèles ont joué un rôle dans l'élaboration de cette forme
> *qui à mis des siècles à se stabiliser* et ... il y a du vrai dans la plupart des
> hypothèses avancées. (1957: 157)

5.1.1 Mossé

Mossé has produced what is probably the most famous and complete study on the diachronic question of the progressive. His two-part monograph (1938) remains a landmark of historical linguistics. His thoughts on the subject were later reproduced and expanded in a 1957 article.

According to his research, the collocation of the present participle with BE, because of the meaning of these linguistic entities, has always been latent in Indo-European languages: "Si loin qu'on remonte dans le passé, on [la] retrouve" (1938: 8). Visser (1973: §1852) adds that Mossé's and Nickel's (see below, 5.1.4) investigations

> have brought to light that a construction consisting of the existential verb [O.E. = *beon/wesan*] + a present participle was used in quite a number of older Indo-European and Semitic languages. It occurred in Hittite, Vedic, Sanskrit, Hebrew, Classical Greek, Aramaic, Classical Latin, Old Slavonic, Gothic, Old Saxon, Old Frisian, Old Russian.

Nevertheless, when such a periphrasis occurs in early Germanic languages (including, of course, Old English) its source, Mossé points out, can be traced directly to Greek or Latin influence. Thus limited in the beginning to translations and the dialect of scribes, the verbal form became more widespread with the introduction and influence of the Vulgate.

Mossé attributes the overwhelming development of this form to the demise of the aspectual system of the preverbs which he argues were used to mark, in OE, perfective events. He comes to the conclusion that the progressive is a new system taking over the failing preverb system: "Ce système n'est plus morphologique (emploi de préverbes), mais syntaxique. Il va utiliser la forme périphrastique qui s'est abondamment développée en vieil-anglais sous l'influence du latin." This change took time and "il faudra des siècles pour qu'il s'étende à toute la conjugaison et que l'on aboutisse ainsi à un nouveau système binaire" (1957: 157). According to him, there was a

serious problem with the aspectual system of OE working with preverbs such as *ge-*, survivors of an older binary system opposing an indeterminate/durative aspect and a determined, perfective or momentaneous one. The change is brought about as *ge*, which "on a tellement abusé", comes to be *i-* and then disappears, carrying in its wake the other preverbs.[1]

But Mossé is not a hardheaded Latinist. Although he sees the use in earlier texts as the result of Latin contamination, the subsequent developments were, in his mind, for the most part of native English nature. "Having given a detailed frequency breakdown of the ME progressive by text and dialect area, Fernand Mossé argues that it must have been inherited from Old English, though it seemed to die out for a time in the southwest (1938b: §60)" (Denison 1993: 403). The same view of continuity from Old to Modern English is shared by van der Gaaf who asked, "Why, then, should all sorts of juggling tricks be resorted to, in order to account for the occurrence of this construction, which I consider to be English 'pure and undefiled', in thirteenth century and later texts?" (1930b: 205).

The cross-linguistic evidence can be taken in two ways: although Latin-influenced texts bear the greatest number of 'proto-progressive' constructions — especially in the *Orosius*, which, except for two sections of English origin (the voyages of Ohthere and Wulfstan, cf. Jespersen 1940: IV, 165), has the greatest frequency of 'progressives' that side of 1900 — these are not so often used to translate Latin equivalents (*verba deponentia*). From this one could (haphazardly) deduce that the Latin influence was not direct but instead showed the scribes that one could make use of such a collocation in one's language if need be. "At any rate, it is perfectly futile to search for real syntactical reasons for the employment of the periphrastic form in translated OE texts" (Jespersen 1940: IV, 166).

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[1]This question will be examined below (5.3).

Scheler (1961: 66-7), writing some twenty years after Mossé's monograph, is of the same opinion, giving a series of reasons for the Latinist view, but also offering four more reasons to doubt it was the only source.

In Mossé's opinion, the IE latency found its application in English as an aspectual marker, under the presence of Latin translations and analogy with several other structures, including the gerund.

Mossé discusses (1938b: §§78ff.) the place of analogy with other like forms in the rise of the periphrastic form; these constructions "avec verbes de mouvement ou d'états employés en fonctions de copule (...), qui ont commencé à prendre une certaine importance en vieil-anglais le jour où l'on a substitué *he come fleogende* à l'ancien tour *he com fleogan*, ne cessent de se développer en moyen-anglais" (1938b: §78). This is reminiscent of other conclusions, such as Nickel's.

Although he sees it as weak, Mossé does not discount altogether the possibility of French influence, which may have sustained the English progressive in the period 1200-1340 (1938b: §§90-99; see also van der Gaaf 1930b: 213-15). Latin too had its influence on the scribes of the Medieval period and may very well have led them to use more often the present participle than their monolingual compatriots.

5.1.2 Jespersen

Jespersen's is another landmark analysis of the origin of the progressive form. According to his earlier views (*i.e.* around 1909), the MnE progressive "seems to have little, if anything to do with the OE *he was feohtende*" being rather "aphetic for *I am a-reading* where *a* represents the preposition *on*, and the form in *-ing* is not the participle but the noun" (1940, IV: 168-9). Some years later, in the second edition, he modified this view into "they are to a great extent due to the old construction *I am a-reading*" (quoted in 1940: IV, 169). His still later view brings into the picture a fusion of the present participle and the deverbal noun into the MnE *ing*.

> The modern English expanded tenses are in some vague way a continuation of
> the old combination of the auxiliary verb and the participle in *-ende*; but after
> this ending had been changed into *-inge* and had thus become identical with

that of the verbal substantive, an amalgamation took place of this construction and the combination *be on* + the sb, in which *on* had become *a* and was then dropped (by aphesis, cf. I 9.95) (1940: IV, 169).

Jespersen advocates that the *ing* form found in the 'expanded tenses' is not to be viewed as a present participle, in light of the history of the progressive: it is a verbal substantive (1940: IV, 169). This view is challenged by Nehls who cites lowland Scots as a variety of English possessing the progressive (in fact, it seems to be used more often than in London English) but without having had the *-in(g)* noun amalgamated with the *-an(d)* present participle (1974: 170) and so skipping what Jespersen seems to consider the main step in the process. Furthermore, according to the evidence cited in Labov (1991: 87f.), the pronunciation of the *-ing* in progressives ([in]) is consistent with the pronunciation generally found with verbal uses of the V-*ing*, and not with the nominal tendency ([iŋ]).

The subphrase *be on V-ing*, which we find in ME has a parallel in German, in what is sometimes called the *Rheinische Durativ*, a turn which we also find in Dutch:[2]

(1)   Ich bin am Schreiben. [German]

(2)   Ik ben aan het schrijven. [Dutch]
     "I am at the writing"

These constructions do not represent the event in the same way as the ME progressive periphrasis. Rather, they present the subject as being *at the point* (or *step*) *of doing V.* Furthermore, although the pattern is nearly identical to the English progressive, the (amalgamated) article and the capital spelling of the verb indicate its nominalization. That this kind of expression often contains the adverb "gerade" (roughly 'just now') helps put the subject in a lexicalized time-frame.[3]

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[2] or in French constructions like "il est à écrire une lettre"

[3] I am indebted to Torsten Leuschner (at the time a doctoral student in Linguistics, Freie Universität Berlin) for these comments.

But Jespersen may nevertheless well be right in pointing out that the (ME)/MnE progressive bears little resemblance to the OE construction. There does seem to be a break between the two.[4]

5.1.3   Celticists

In a very interesting article, Dal argues (1952) that the turn 'be on V-*ing*' was already current in the spoken tongue of the early Englishmen (but, books being written by learned people, it never found its way into the limited OE corpus that has come down to us). Dal presents the deverbal noun and the present participle as being functionally similar. As Mossé (1957: 159) puts it, her claim is that "he wæs huntende" and "he wæs on huntunge" were two allomorphs of a same morpheme. Furthermore, the latter periphrasis would have been more favourably looked upon in the spoken language, whereas the former was used in the more elevated, literary language. This spoken preference for the -*u/ing* led to an abandonment of the -*ende* participle in the first half of the ME period (cf. Chap. IV, 4.2). She claims that the construction became more fashionable as it was influenced by Celtic turns like *yn canu*.

But the more interesting point defended by Dal is that a Celtic substratal influence of forms such as *yn canu*, as well as a possible Norman French influence (*en chantant*), was an important factor in the success of the progressive. Mossé, and others, is far from convinced that substrates could in this way have an influence nearly a thousand years after the demise of the language. Mossé quickly dismisses her argument: "Je n'ai aucun goût pour les hypothèses (même si elles sont à la mode du jour) quand elles ne reposent pas sur des faits contrôlables et bien contrôlés" (1957: 160). He adds later: "Curieuse façon d'écrire la grammaire historique que de spéculer sur ce qui a pu exister dans des états de langue parlés dont nous n'avons gardé aucune trace" (1957: 168).

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[4]According to Nickel (1966), there are no recorded variety of OE which does not exhibit a use of the 'progressive'. He sees it as something totally native, with no Latin source.

The main argument for the Celtic influence, as presented by Keller (1925: 61-6) and later Preusler (1956), seems to be that it is in English, and no other Germanic language, that one finds a progressive which would be coming from a construction close to the Celtic *yn canu* form. To quote Denison (§13.5.2): "Preusler is convinced that the ME construction seen in

(3)   þe ʒomen of Schordych, þat þere were in amendyng of here berseles
      (c1398; Doc. in Bk. Lond. E. 234.19)
      "The yeomen of Shoreditch that there were in repairing of their archery-
      butts"

must have been a direct calque from Celtic and in turn a major contributor to the spread of the progressive in Middle English" (1956: 334).

The reader will note that this sentence is an almost exact parallel to the *Rheinische Durative* construction. Since it can be found in German, Dutch and other Germanic languages, it can hardly be argued to be a calque from a Celtic language. It is a coincidence, says Mossé (1938b: §§100-12), if Celtic should have elected also to make this latent form an instituted characteristic of the language.[5]

5.1.4   Mitchell/Nickel

Mitchell (1976; 1985: §§681ff.) examines the origins and use of the *be + ing* periphrasis in OE. He tempers his study with this comment on the difficult meaning of the MnE form: "And if modern scholars, who have the benefit of native informants and intonation patterns cannot reach agreement about the exact functions of the periphrasis in MnE, it is not to be expected that agreement will be reached for OE" (1976: 490). This affirmation should not be taken at face value, as some linguists have already come up with a fairly good description of this meaning: "the progressive is an imperfective, taking as its matter a notion to which is attached the impression of being incomplete, partial" (Hirtle 1967: 32, see also below, §5.3.2).

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[5]Mossé acknowledges the possibility of Celtic influence on dialects of MnE.

Two facts stand out from Mitchell's study, which is in part based on Nickel's (1966) analysis of the data. The first is that (as has already been stated) the construction is not a Latinate calque: it is not used consistently to translate Latin (perfective indicative of) deponent verbs but also other forms, such as paraphrases with present participles (cf. Mitchell 1976: 487), but seems nonetheless to be influenced by these (1976: 489). Secondly, there is no consistency either in the way the collocation is used — by the same author or in the same text,[6] although there seem to be influencing factors such as the subject discussed (esp. narrations or descriptions) or what Mitchell calls the "attitude" of the translation *vis-à-vis* the periphrasis. Mitchell refuses to grant a single (underlying) meaning to the collocation and cites examples of parallel uses of the periphrasis and the simple form as corroboration that there is no single meaning (see below, §5.2.1 on parallel structures).[7] He gives, however, some tendencies of usage:

> First, the verbs which on Nickel's evidence display periphrastic forms tend to be 'imperfective' (...) and to belong to certain semantic groups—verbs of rest, e.g. *wunian*; of movement, e.g. *faran*; of speaking, e.g. *cweþan*; and of physical action, e.g. *feohtan*; and verbs which express a state or a change of state, e.g. *libban* and *growan*, or a mood, e.g. *sorgian*. (...) Second, they tend to be intransitive (...) The periphrases are more often found in the third person singular or plural (...) They are often accompanied by temporal, local, or modal, adverb modifiers (1985: §691).

As for the origin of the 'progressive', Mitchell acknowledges Latin influence though not as the ultimate source (1985: §695). He then turns to Nickel's 1966 and 1967 studies of the subject (for a discussion, see Mitchell 1985: §696ff.) and adopts their point of view, which is the following.

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[6] The same thing can be observed in today's use.

[7] This argument is reminiscent of his description of the use of the present perfect in OE (1985: §§634, 723, etc.). This use, although at first sight inconsistent, is nevertheless quite similar to that of the corresponding construction in Modern Dutch or German (cf. Chapter II, §2.1).

Since there are many ways of using the V-*ende* form, each with a particular meaning (the verb 'to be' plus a predicative adjective, with the 'appositive' participle, and with an agent noun in -*end*), Nickel (and Mitchell) argues, there has been some sort of mixing of the different uses into one verb form: "However, the E[xpanded] F[orm] in OE does not owe its existence to any single one of the constructions discussed, *i.e.* predicative adjectives, appositive participle, the type *he sæt lærende*, and agent nouns, but rather to a blending of all of them" (Nickel 1967: 274, quoted by Mitchell §701).

This conclusion may be fine for OE, but for the rest of the history of the language and the existence of the progressive in MnE, it goes against the fact discussed above (5.1.2) that, for one thing, the -*ing* is not a noun but a participle, and that IE languages including, we must admit, English, have a demonstrated tendency to grammaticalize the collocation of BE with the present participle (if there is one, of course). Although I am forced to admit that this development is in no way a convincing argument for the origin of the progressive, the existence of this potential should be borne in mind when discussing this matter. We are, after all, talking about people who we must presume used the tools of the language in (almost) every way they could. And if the adjunction of BE + the present participle signifies for them, then they'll want to use it for what it is. The fact of the matter remains that there has to be a need for such a form, as there was for the present perfect (cf. Bélanger 1995b: 14ff., in appendix) and analyses such as Mitchell's and Nickel's fail to see this as important in the discussion.

5.2 The Data

The data presented here is divided into four sections: what the general use of the periphrasis in Old and Middle English was; what kind of verbal regimen did the *ing* take in these periods, as well as its High German counterpart at various stages of the

language; what the evolution of the paradigm of use (with *be*, in the perfect, etc.) was. And, finally, what sort of continuity from OE to ME we can observe.

5.2.1 Usage

In OE, the periphrasis can sometimes be replaced by *do*, as in (taken from Denison):

(4) þa wæron simbel binnan Romebyrg wuniende (*Or* 72.1)

"those [senators] were always within Rome dwelling"

(5) þæt hi wæron genihtsume 7 on soþ llufe wellende (*HyGl* 2 (Stevenson) 94.2)

"that they were contented and in true love boiling"

(6) þonne *beo we sittende* be þæm wege swa se blinda *dyde* (*HomS* 8 (*BlHom* 2) 23.8)

"then be (SUBJ.) we sitting by that way-side as that blind one did"

Denison tells us that this example

> has been discussed by at least two scholars. Traugott (1992: 188-9) tentatively
> suggests that the substitute *dyde* rather than *wæs* implies that *beo ... sittende* in
> the first clause is verbal, not adjectival — which is not necessarily incompatible
> with Visser's implication that DO is used 'catachrestically' (*i.e.* wrongly) there
> (1963-73: §188); cf. §100.2.7 (1993: 377).

On the other hand, it could be that *dyde* substitutes for the phrase made up of a verb and its adjectival complement.

(7) ða gesceafta þe þæs an scyppend gesceop synden mænig-fealde ... Sume *syndan creopende* on eorðan mid eallum lichoman, swa swa wurmas *doð*. Sume gað on twam fotum... (*ÆLS* I 1.14.49)

"the creature that this one creator created are manifold ... some are crawling on earth with all their body just as worms do. Some go on two legs ..."

(8) þei trowen þat after hire deth þei schull *ben etynge & drynkynge* in
þat oþer world & *solacynge* hem with hire wife as þei *diden* here.
(?a1425(c1400) Mandev.(1) 167.31)

"They believed that after their death they should be eating and drink-
ing in that other world and solacing themselves with their wives as they
did here"

The typical use of the *be* + V*ende/yng* is with verbs such as *wunian* 'live, reside',
secgan 'say' or *byrnian* 'burn':

(9) 7 þy ilcan geare ferde to Rome mid micelre weorþnesse, 7 þær *was* .xii.
monaþ *wuniende* (ChronA 66.8 (855))

"and that same year fared to Rome with great honour and there was
12 months dwelling"

(10) eall middangeard *bið* þonne on dæg *byrnende* (HomU 34 (Nap 42) 25.15)
"all Middle-Earth is then by day burning"

(11) Swa se secg hwata *secggende wæs* // laðra spella; he ne leag fela //
wyrda ne worda. (Beo 3028)

"thus the man brave saying was (of) hateful stories he not lied much
(of) fates or words"

There are many cases where the progressive is used to translate Latin past depo-
nent verbs, for instance in:

(12) and hraðe þa gefremednesse ðære arfæstan bene *wæs fyldenge* (Bede 1
4.32.7)

"and quickly then fulfilment (of) the pious prayer was following" (Lat:
consecutus est)

(13) þo Octa hit onderstod, þat heo *comyng were* (c1425 Glo.ChronA (hrl)
I 142.15 (= Clg. 2999))

(14)   and gecum to minum ðeowan Saulum, se *is diddende* minre miltsunge
mid eornestum mode, (ÆCHom i. 386.19)

"and help to my slave soul, that is doing [to] my mercy with earnest
heart"

But these examples only serve to exhibit the Latin influence in OE which seems to
have more or less died out in ME.

The *be + V-ing* construction can also be found in the imperative form:

(15)   *Beoð blowende* and welige hwilwendlice, þæt ge ecelice wædlion
(ÆCHom i. 64.15)

"Be blowing and prosper temporarily, that you eternally be poor"

(16)   *Beon* eower lendena ymbgyrde, and eower leohtfatu *byrnende.*
(ÆCHom ii. 564.24)

"Be your land enclosed and your lantern burning"

There is, in the next cases (from Mossé 1938a: §233), a notion of duration which,
however, can also be expressed by a simple form and this fact has Mitchell saying
that "these distinctions are not grammatical; they depend on context and/or adverbs
or adverb expressions" (1985: §687).

(17)   7 þæs on Eastron worhte Ælfred cyning lytle werede geweorc æt
Æþelinga eigge, 7 of þam geweorce *was winnende* wið þone here
(ChronA 76.2 (878)

"And then on Easter King Alfred wrought a little band [for] work to
Ætheling's awe and the work there was toiling against them"

"But these are at best dubious; the idea could well be that of a continuing state of
warfare or good deeds rather than a recurring series" (Mitchell 1985: §688).

(18)   hwilum wæs on horse sittende, ac oftor on his fotum gangende

"at time he mounted on horseback, oftener he went on foot"

(19) he þanon cleacode swiðe earhlice to porte and æfre he him wæs ousit-
tende þæt hine sim man gecneowe (*ÆL* 23.493)

"he thence hurried very timidly to the town, and ever he was vexing
himself lest someone should recognize him"

(20) he æfre þas leode mid here and mid ungylde tyrwigende wæs (Chr E
1100)

"he was ever harassing the people with a host and with a heavy geld"

An interesting use of the construction can be seen in parallel structures where we
have, for instance, a coordination of a progressive and a finite verb:

(21) ac se æglæca *ehtende wæs*, doerc deaþscua, duguþe ond geogoþ, seo-
made ond syrede (Beo 159)

"but the monster, the dark death-shadow, was persecuting [them]; old
retainers and young ones remained and conspired"

(22) Europe hio onginð, swa ic ær cwæþ, of Danai þære ie, seo *is irnende*
of norþdæle, of Riffeng þæm beorgum, þa sindon neh þæm garsecge þe
mon hateð Sarmondisc; 7 seo ea Danai irnð þonan suðryhte ... (*Or.*
8.14 (trans??)

"Europe begins there, as I said before, at the Danai's water, which is
flowing from the Northdale, off the mountain Riffeng; these are near
the sea which is called Sarmondish; and it, the Danai, flows from there
southward ..."

5.2.2 Verbal regimen

In OE times, one can find a few instances of the *-u/ing* deverbal noun governing what
seems to be an accusative (or sometimes a dative). All of these, however, come from
translations (direct or indirect) of Latin gerunds.

In OE, the present participle did not have verbal regimen; this feature seems to

le participe présent d'abord (et en vieil-anglais), le nom verbal en -*ing* ensuite (et en moyen-anglais) ont acquis le pouvoir de gouverner un objet à l'accusatif" (Mossé 1957: 162). There are numerous examples of present participles governing accusatives, datives or genitives in the Paston papers (their various writers are fond of recounting the events with clause-initial participles as in "Wanting to build a bridge, I contracted a mason").

In German or Dutch, sentences of this nature are rather literary and this, throughout the history of the language. Furthermore, although *sein* + present participle collocations can be found at diverse stages of the history of German, they never attain the level of productivity of a regular syntactic process (from Lockwood 1968: 161):

(23)   *was* thaʒ folc *beitônti* Zachariam (Tatian (OHG))

'the people waited for Zacharias'

(24)   daʒ er im *bitende wese* / der sêle heiles (Hartmann (MHG))

'so that he may pray for the salvation of (his) soul'

There are some examples in Luther's Bible translation (from Wells 1987: 240):

(25)   Es *waren* aber Jüden zu Jerusalem *wonend* (Acts 2: 5)

As well as from other eNHG sources, such as the Paumgartner letters (1592) (also from Wells):

(26)   Und *bin* zu vernehmen *wartten* [NHG: *wartend*], was du ... weytters
       bedürfftig (bist) ...

There is no evidence to suggest that this periphrasis has ever been fully productive with regard to verbal government. That is to say that it is only found either without a complement, or with a genitive or instrumental one, something which nouns and adjectives can also have. And one of the principal features of the MnE progressive is that it has full verbal regimen.

In Old English, we nevertheless find the following instances of the present participle with a direct object:

(27) DRIHTEN *WÆS SPRECENde* ðas word to Moyse 7 þus cwæð
(LawAfEl 1.0 26)

"God was speaking these words to Moses and thus said..."

(28) ðis sindan ða domas ðe se . . . God self sprecende wæs to Moyse 7 him
bebead to healdanne. (*Laws* 42, Ælfred, Intr., c.49ª)

"these are the laws that God himself spoke to Moses and him com-
manded to uphold."

(29) Ely sette hym at þe temple dore yn a chayre, and *was herkenyng* Fro
þe batayle sum tydyng (a1400(c1303) Mannyng HS 5014)

From 1400 onward, we can find more cases:

(30) thou *shalt be hauyng* power on ten citees (Luke 19.17 (sim. WyclSerm
II 78.59) Transl.)

(31) all *is envyronynge* the roundnesse of the erthe & of the see
(?a1425(c1400) Mandev (1) 122.9)

(32) whan the enemyes *weren* ferr *pursuynge* the chace (Id. 18.23)

(33) þe story telluþ how Iesu *was castyng* owt a feend of a man (a1425
Wycl.Serm. I 42.2)

5.2.3 Paradigm

It is interesting to note that, as Bauer (1970: 150) points out, the grammaticalization
of the progressive postdates Chaucer and Gower, and so would be at best a 15th-
century development. Furthermore, Visser (1973: §2148) notes that there are no
instances of the perfect progressive before the fourteenth century. This, according to
Mitchell (1985: §684), is the result of the late appearance of a past participle in the
paradigm of BE.

(34)   . . .he sceal *beon cwylmigende* // mid deofle aa butan ende (ByrM[8] 242.28)

"he shall be suffering with devils always without end" (notice the rhyme)

(35)   EAhte þinges nomelich leaðieð us to wakien ...7 *beo wuchinde* (c1230(?a1200) Ancr. 39b.3)

"eight things especially urge us to be-watchful ... and be working"

(36)   lat now no hevy thought *Ben hangyng* in hertes of yow tweye (a1425(a1325) Chaucer, TC 3.1139)

(37)   if þi parischen In sin lang *has ligand bene* (a1400(a1325) Cursor 26292)

There is only one example of the sequence modal–perfect–progressive during the ME period (from Visser 1973: §712):

(38)   for þai trowed þat he *schuld hafe bene hingand* on þat crosse as lang as þat crosse myght last (?a1425 Mandev.(2) (Eg) 5.15)

5.2.4   Continuity from Old to Middle English

Scheffer (§19.5) has an impressive list of parallels between the OE and the (e)ME usage of the periphrasis (although some of his examples are doubtful for various reasons) which he uses to argue for a continuity of usage. The reader will note, however, that the great majority of his OE example are from a translation (Gregory's *Dialogues*) as is the bulk of the ones he presents for the 13th century. The 14th c. examples come in part from the *Cursor Mundi*, which we will be discussing toward the end of this chapter.

The main problem with Scheffer's data (other than not presenting evidence from 1400 onwards) is that parallel use with specific words (auxiliaries, temporal adjuncts, etc.) do not necessarily imply continuity. The fact that both the MnE present perfect

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[8] "Further examples [with pre-modals] are given in Wülfing 1894-1901: §401"

and the Dutch *voltooid* can be used with *if, when, can*, etc., does not mean that they have the same meaning or range of use — they don't. Furthermore, as I have stated at the outset, the data come mostly from Latin and OFr translations.

5.3 Reanalysis

As seems the custom, the question of the psychological origin has been greatly neglected in the discussions of the source for the progressive in Modern English. Going back to Mossé's analysis, the replacement of an old system of aspectual preverbs by the simple/progressive opposition poses some problems, not unlike those encountered when dealing with the origin of the perfect form (cf. Bélanger 1995b: 14ff., in appendix). For one thing, the preverbs tended, in OE, to be used with past forms of the verb (mostly past participles) — as well as with adjectives and nouns — and the new system can be applied to any form. Such a replacement is doubtful and would have to be supported by other evidence, which so far has not been the case.

One fact which may lend support to this claim is the survival, in German, of preverbs and the non-existence of a progressive. But one may ask whether these preverbs are still aspectually productive and not just an automatic feature. Can one rightfully say that there is still a preverbal aspectual system in German or in Dutch? The fact that the MnE progressive/simple opposition is very productive in the present tense, whereas the OE preverbs were chiefly a matter of past tense, indicates that very different conceptions are involved in the two systems. It seems somewhat bizarre that an aspectual system could make a perfect/imperfect distinction in the past but not in the present. But as Mossé points out, the system, in OE, is collapsing.

As for the other analyses presented, for instance the possibility of a loan from Latin, French or a Celtic substratum, we must consider that, as Singh puts it, "Although contact can bring about changes in redundancy-orientated aspects of grammar, it cannot easily touch its process-orientated aspects" (1996: 44). An interesting

study on grammatical borrowings is Nadkarni's 1975 study of syntactic change in Konkani (cf. *supra*, Chap. IV, 4.2.2). That in such a context of constant bilingualism, only a relatively minor grammatical consequence can be observed tells us a lot about the difficulties facing grammatical transmigrations from language to language. The changes in the relative clauses are, for one thing, consistent with the 'borrowing' language and secondly, they could be reduced to a change in the meaning of the 'interrogative' pronoun *khanco*. There was arguably no grammatical borrowing *per se*, although there was a strong semantic influence.

5.3.1 Expressive demands

If we come back to Chapter II, we can see that one effect of the *Korrel shift* on the discursive extensity of the English simple form, linked with Korrel's first difference ("duration so far'), is its present-day inability to express metaphase (dynamic) events in progress; events which began before the point of time reference and may evolve afterwards, in which change is still possible without affecting the lexical meaning of the verb. For instance, in German one can say 'es regnet' (literally, "it rains") to express an event going on at the present moment. In English, this phrase would be used to express a normal state of affairs, something constant, "It rains a lot in these parts." The same use of the simple present can be found in "The earth revolves around the sun;" that is, the event is monophase: nothing changes as long as the event lasts, there is no expenditure of the lexical context. To express a progressing event, English uses a peculiar construct, the aptly-named *progressive form*: "it is raining."

5.3.2 A new hypothesis

If one examines the progressive (fig. 5.1), one notices that it serves to place the subject within an event having an actualized part and thus effectively reproducing

the effect of the pre-*Korrel shift* representation of the instant. The existential verb *be*
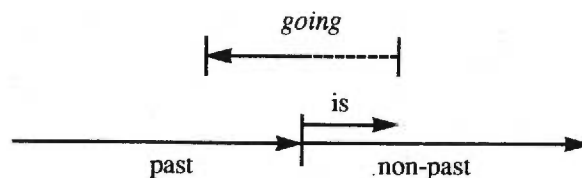
Figure 5.1: The progressive

makes the subject co-incident to the participle which, it has been argued, represents an event unfolding itself, hence with an actualized and a potential phase: "Thus as its lexical meaning, BE appears to represent a stretch where some moment within the participle's event is being actualized, thus giving rise to the impression of an 'event in progress' " (Hirtle 1997: 121). This representation is close to that proposed by Langacker (1987: 77–8).

There seems to be little doubt, in view of what has transpired in section one (and Chap. II), that it is its representational needs which pushed English to create this periphrasis to cover events expressed in Dutch or German by a simple form, but which its own simple form could no longer represent. Whence the existence of the periphrasis unique to English — and the problem it raises concerning its nature. This being so, outside interference or influence had nothing to do with this development. It was a purely native process, as was the creation of the perfect, brought upon by psychological needs and an Indo-European tendency.

In the evolution of the progressive form, there are three important facts which have been pointed out by many historians whose hypotheses have been discussed here and which can partially be observed in the data presented.

Meaning

First of all, the *be* + present participle collocation found in Old English differs in both usage and (presumed) meaning from its MnE counterpart. As Scheffer points out: "The occurrence of the progressive [in Old English] is still far from predictable, the decision to use it or not is still often an arbitrary one (...) on the whole the use of the progressive gives no more than an indication of what it was to become later" (1975: 213). Many of the instances, even those quoted by Scheffer seemingly as progressive, are no more than BE governing an adjective. From what we can observe, the periphrasis in Old English (and eME) has more to do with similar ones in eMHG or Dutch. The underlying grammatical rationale of the form found in MnE is not present in OE; the 'progressive' was much less, if in any way, compulsory than it is today.

Decline and Rise

The second point of interest, one which has led to many contradictory conclusions, is the decline in the use of the periphrasis in the late Old/early Middle English period, especially in the South (cf. Mossé 1938b: §60; Denison 1993: 403; Scheffer 1975: §19; etc.). For some, this is a sign that the MnE progressive owes more to other forms (such as *to be on hunting*, cf. Jespersen 1949: IV, 168f.) and cross-linguistic influence (Celtic, French; cf. *supra*). To others, it simply shows that Southern dialects lost the form, and regained it from Northern influence (cf. Scheffer 1975, amongst others). Others may yet claim it is only a freak corpus-related problem.

This variation tells us that whatever reason there was to use the periphrasis in OE texts disappeared in late Old English. This reason, or a new one, (re)surfaced in Middle English, presumably from the North, and has been with us ever since. The change in frequency, coupled with previous observations, points to the emergence of a different reason for the use of the progressive. In Old English, there was an undeniably strong Latin influence on the use of the collocation in prose texts (almost

none of which are free of Latin interference). With the passing of time, this influence diminished as more and more laymen's works were to be found, presumably showing states of the language close to the 'real' spoken tongue.

Although one can hardly deny Mossé's point on the potential, in Indo-European languages, to collocate BE and the present participle (where there is one), nor can one forget so present an influence as that of Latin, with its gerundial, participial and infinitival constructions. The same phenomenon can be observed in other Germanic languages that have used this periphrasis; there is always a (literary) Latin background or influence at work (cf. the examples above, § 5.2.2).

What this shows is that whatever reason there is for using the progressive today, it originated in the Middle English period. Something happened which made what seemed to be a colloquially little-used verbal periphrasis of great importance in everyday linguistic life.

Paradigm

The third point of interest is the development of the paradigm of the progressive during the Middle English period. As Mitchell observed, the 'progressive' is not used, in Old English, with *be* or with the perfect: "I have found no examples [in OE] of either the (plu)perfect 'has (had) been taking' or of the passive 'is (was) being taken' or of the combinations involving them. This is not surprising in view of the late appearance of the equivalents of the participles 'been' and 'being'; see §1099" (Mitchell 1985: §684). This fact supports the claim that the use of the *be* + present participle in Old English did have a less grammatical and more lexical basis. The progressive in Old English did not exist as a verbal form *per se*; it was only an occasionally-used device to circumvent problems not related, as such, to the representational capacities of the English grammar. And so it was used more often with monophase events — *contra* today where only metaphase (or *metaphased*) events can be found. Furthermore, this new hypothesis explains why *be* was not used in the

progressive — it being, more often than not, a monophase event.

5.3.3 The Cursor and Cely test

A study of the history of the progressive form would not be complete without a look at how usage spread in ME.

Mossé (1938b: §§53ff.) gives the frequency breakdown for various texts from the main ME dialects, from the 13th to the 15th centuries. As we have stated, the form is widespread in translations from Latin texts, in almost every important learning centre during the OE period. But there are clear indications that the 'revival' of the form came from the more Northern dialects; "sans parler de l'écossais, on remarquera sa fréquence, extrême pour l'époque, dans les dialectes du Yorkshire, chez Richard Rolle et ses disciples. (...) Malgré la difficulté de porter un jugement [due to a lack of texts for an important period in the North], on peut émettre l'hypothèse que la F[orme] P[ériphrastique] a gagné du Nord vers le Sud par l'intermédiaire du Midland-Central" (Mossé 1938b: §§53, 60). Even in this century, Wilson (1915: 118) notes, the progressive form is more frequently used in Scots than in Standard English. For instance:

(39) Aa'm noa cairin

   "I don't care (lit.: I'm not caring)"

Mossé's interpretation is supported by Mustanoja:

> In early ME the occurrence of the periphrasis is limited, except, perhaps, in the North, and its dialectal distribution is very uneven. In late 13th-century texts written north of the Humber it is common. In Kent and the West Midlands it is used to some extent in the 13th century, but is almost non-existent in the southern area west of Kent and in the East Midlands, although, strikingly enough, the *MED*, under *ben* 9, quotes an early instance from the *Peterborough Chronicle* (...) The variability of 13th-century usage is illustrated by scribal variants

in MS Jesus Coll. Oxf. 29, executed shortly after 1276 in Worcestershire (1960: 585).

Cursor Mundi

This Northern appearance and subsequent spreading South echoes the development of post-*Korrel shift* English, as presented in Chapter II (§2.4.1). The various *Cursor Mundi* MSS show a discrepancy in the use of the 'progressive' between the Trinity version and the others. According to Hupe, the Trinity MS, although directly dependent upon a Northern source, was written in Southern lands:

> It is not necessary to seek for evidence of T's immediate dependency upon a Northern MS. The pedigree of the MSS., and the observations on G[öttingen], have proved that T as well as G depends upon a more Northern source, which is not likely to have been purely Northumbrian. Our scribe (T) belongs to the South-Midlands, and more towards the West, as is seen from the (...) phonology. I suppose that T was copied in the south of the ancient diocese of Hereford [but the agreement in words shows that F and T are closely connected—R. Morris]. As to its age, the difference of style between North-Midland and South-Midland scribes cannot but make me persist in my supposition that T was copied in the first quarter of the 15th century (1893: 135).

Half the time, T uses something other than the progressive of other MSS. Table 5.1 gives the different strategies used by the scribes, followed by a sample of distribution. In this table, "Simple" means that a simple form stands for the 'progressive' and "n/a" that the phrasing of the sentence has been too greatly changed. Line 2513 of Trinity reads *Abraham ful euel likonde*, and at 4145, *For mon lyuynge þei seide ny wif*. The instances of *lastand* and *liuand* have been omitted. Of the 50 recorded instances (after line 10000) of progressives in the Cotton MS (omitting *lasting, living,* etc., as they can arguably be considered adjectival), 31 were kept in the Trinity MS: the ones in rhyme position were in *-onde* whereas the others were in *-yng(e)*. The

Line	Cotton MS	Fairfax	Trinity
1562	And þat *was heldand* al til il,	Simple	n/a
2005	Quen þe werld *was gangand*	Id.	*goonde*
2357	For him he *was mornand* in thoght	Id.	Simple
2403	Als þai *war wendand* þider-ward	Id.	Simple
2513	Abram *was* þen ful *mislikand*	Id.	Simple?
2966	Quils he *war lendand* þam biside;	Simple	Simple
3220	þare his frendes *were wonand*	Id.	Id.
4062	Til his allan þat *was standand*	Id.	*stondynge*
4079	Ioseph *was* mast at ham *duelland*	Id.	simple
4458	And asked qui þau *murnand were.*	n/a	*mournyng*
4599	þat al-þer nest sal *be foluand*	Id.	*folwonde*
5256	þof he thre dais *had fastand* bene	Id.	*fastyng*
5262	I loue godd þat þou *liuand es*	*on liue ys*	*lyuynge*
5674	*Was stonand* in his hert, ...	Id.	*dredinge*
5687	Als þai *war drauand* [to] watur best	Simple	Simple
5964	þar *wonnand war* his aun men	Id.	Simple
6088	Hones noght quils yee *ar etand*	Id.	*etonde*
6441	þis ilk folk *was vntelland*	Id.	Simple
7917	þar *was wonand* wit-in a wike	Id.	Simple
8375	þat *yernand es* þaa nu in strijf	n/a(??)	Simple
8664	We *war* in a hus bath *wonnand*	Id.	*are dwellonde*
8763	Quils he *was timberand* to þis thing	Id.	*tymbryng*
9172	Sexten yeir *regnand was* he þan	Id.	Simple

Table 5.1: Data from the *Cursor Mundi*

remaining 19 cases were either rendered by simple forms (15) or paraphrased (2); the two unaccounted for, I don't know just how to describe.

There are 5 cases in which the present participle seems to govern an accusative object:

(40) For þan he *was* summan godd *dridand* (l 10226; T.= *dredonde*)

"For he was dreading some god"

(41) Suld *be* all þe *mistruand* (1 11366; T.= *mis trownode*)

"All should be disbelieving thee"

In this example, the object could even be in the dative.

(42) And quile he *was* þis cale *gaderand* (1 12526; T.= *gederonde*)

"While he was gadering this cole"

(43) Quils þai *war* þus him *handland* (1 15839; T.= simple)

"Whilst they were handling him"

(44) And euer it sal him *foluand be* (1 22066; T.= *folewyng*)

"And it shall ever be following him" (Wouldn't this be a simple?)

There is here a clear indication that whatever the motivation was for the periphrasis in the Cotton MS dialect it was lost to the scribes of both Fairfax and Trinity. The verbs in C are for the most part durative (monophase) in nature or use, which would indicate a *raison d'être* closer to that of the OE periphrasis than the MnE one. That the periphrasis did not occur too often in F or T seems to indicate that either it was not felt as relevant in the context of a narrative, or it was not used by either scribe.

The Cely letters

As for the *Cely letters*, in all the letters and authors — be they *pre-* or *post-shift* — one possible progressive could be found:

(45) and allso in party of payment of seche goodys as he ys owyng vnto me,

as ye know well (5/12-13, William Maryon)

"and also in part payment of such goods as he owes me, as you well know"

In this context, however, a present-day speaker would not even use a progressive. It is possible that we have here a case of BE with an appositive adjective use of the participle. A few 'near-progressives' are also present:

(46) Ye schall understand that Robard Cely and Thomas Folbord my pryn-
tys be comyng to Caleys, (13/3-4, Richard the Elder)

"You shall understand [by this letter] that R.C. and Th.F. my appren-
tice have come to Calais"

(47) Syr, Harry Bryan, the bryngar of thys, laburs me soor to goo and se
Rawson[s] dowttyr. I am beheldyng to hym for hys labyr, (168/13-14,
Richard the Younger)

"Sir, H.B., the bringer of this, labours me sore to go and see Rawson's
daughter. I am beholden to him for his labour"

(48) they by byssy at makyng of haw now (94/9, Robert Good)

"they are busy at making the hay now"

(49) and howr fathers towmbe ys a settynge wp (195/7, Richard the
Younger)

"and our father's tomb is being set up"

(50) but I thancke Godd I am amendyd and walkynge (201/30-1, William)

"but I thank God I am amended and walking"

In the first two cases, there seems to be a present participle mistaken for a past one,
yielding a perfect (in the first case) or a passive instead of the supposed progressive,
as the timeframe in the letters make evident. In the other cases, we observe roughly
the same structure as the modern *Rheinische Durativ*.

For the larger *Cely Papers* collection (which includes the non-epistolary material
seized at the same time as the letters themselves), however, Mossé (1938b: §56) gives
a frequency of use of 7 progressives for every 100 000 words, adding "Pas de F[orme]
P[rogressive] chez Richard Cely the Elder (qui meurt vers 1481) mais seulement dans
la jeune génération, Richard the Younger, son fils et William Cely".

Why then is there no progressive in the Cely correspondence, not even from
Richard the Younger, that notorious *post-shifter*? There are two principal reasons

why a form would not appear in a corpus: either the style and context of the material do not call for it, or it is not present in the language of the writers.

The style of the Cely letters, it has been pointed out before, is not what we could call formal, except for frozen opening and closing statements ("Right worshipful and well-beloved brother, I recommend me unto you ..."). The matters of concern, though very often hinging on trade, are diverse enough to provide a wide range of contexts. But that is not to say that the progressive is absent from all the writers' idiolects. If we compare this with letters from this century we find that present-day epistolists make good use, as one would expect, of the progressive form. But, this is not always the case, depending on the author. In a series of almost 300 letters written by J.R.R. Tolkien, and displaying a large range of styles, the progressive rarely appears more than once or twice in any of them. It must, however, be pointed out that in present-day English most writers would make a more extensive use of the periphrasis than Tolkien did.

The use of the progressive has increase steadily up to the 20th century. Given this and the fact that even today some epistolists rarely use it, it is not surprising that we find no instance of the form in the Cely correspondence. But let us look at the hypothesis proposed in this chapter: the MnE use of the progressive stems from a change in δ — the *Korrel shift* — creating an expressional demand filled by an already existing linguistic potential (the combination of *be* and the present participle). There is a difference of use, in this particular community, as we have established in Chapter II (cf. §2.4.1), between Richard the father and Richard the son. Richard the Younger, in this context, was a pioneer of sorts — even though his usage may have sprung from another dialect, already 'shifted' — and being so, he may not have completed the shift. That is to say that not all the means of the language would have been used to compensate for the change.

We must remember that he is surrounded by an almost entirely *pre-shift* group

and that most of the letters written by *post-shift* speakers were directed to *pre-shift* ones. *Post-shift* speakers could be using two dialects and may not feel the need to use newfangled form in order to compensate for a change only they have felt.

In this situation, the difference of usage in the perfect is, paradoxically, more fundamental and less 'destructive' of communication than the newly created simple/progressive opposition. Although the *be* + present participle collocation is already present in that language, at least as a potential, it does not convey the same contrast with the simple form of the verb for a *post-Korrel shift* speaker that it does for a *pre-shift* one. It does not fill the same 'functional slot' in the two dialects. Its use by Richard the Younger would lead more to confusion than to communication; unconsciously, if he did possess the form, he would not want to use it.

Paston letters

Another collection of letters is of help here, the *Paston Letters* (cf. Chap II, 2.3.2), where we find a few occurrences of the progressive. One of the authors of these is Sir John Falstolf, who, as his use of the perfect indicates, is quite probably post-*shift*:

(51)   in punisshyng of perjure and embracery that many yeris hathe ben and
       yette is usid in this shire (234/15-17)

Nor can we find clear instances of *for to* with the infinitive from his pen. His letters (which span only three fourths of the first volume — that is, until his death) contain a few instances of progressives, for example:

(52)   yff the shyreve have not a gode undreshyreff whych *were not enclynyng*
       to the partie of T.H. (132/6-7)

There is also a Claim against the Crown in which he makes ample use of the phrase "[it] is owing" (cf. example above). These facts support our hypothesis that there is a link to be made between the *Korrel shift* and the advent of the progressive in English.

Conclusion

The three points extracted from the data (meaning, paradigm and dialect), far from casting doubts on the hypothesis presented above (section 5.3.2), reinforce it. In Chapter II, we saw that the *Korrel-shift* found its origin in the Northern regions and then spread southward, which is compatible with the development of the ME progressive. The absence of the MnE grammatical rationale behind the use of the periphrasis in OE and eME corresponds to the nonexistence of the expressive demand of post-*Korrel-shift* English. Furthermore, the difficulty of verbal regimen points to a non-grammaticalization of the construction as a paradigmatic verb form.

Chapter 6

Auxiliaries I: Do

Introduction

This and the next chapter will discuss the origin of the particular use, in Modern English, of certain auxiliaries. The case of the modal auxiliaries will be treated in the next chapter, and here we will endeavour to examine the history of *do* as an auxiliary.

There is no need to argue that, in present-day English, *do* is something of a ubiquitous element as the support for negation and interrogation (for non-auxiliary verbs), as well as as a mark of emphasis and anaphoric ellipsis (these are the features which are sometimes known as NICE properties (Huddleston 1976: 333): direct Negation, Inversion in questions, Code — *i.e.*, post-verbal ellipsis — and Emphasis).

This, as the evidence shows, is obviously not the case in Old English. Although OE *don* did have the first two NICE properties, it is only because they were at the time common to all verbs. What is more, its use in post-verbal ellipsis could be compared to the ModFr *faire* which can hardly be called an auxiliary in the same sense as the Modern English ones. We must then conclude, with Denison, that "At the Old English stage there would be little justification for calling DON an auxiliary verb" (1993: 255).

The question before us is, from the full verb which *don* was in OE, how did *do* come to be the all-important 'operator' (in the words of Quirk *et al.* 1985: §§2.48-9, 3.21-8) it is today? The interesting fact in this question, and this also applies to those of the next chapter, is that the properties now peculiar to *do* were general features of the OE verb. We must therefore conclude that it is something in the whole verb system of English that has changed and brought about the preeminence of the so-called '*do*-support'.

6.1 Previous analyses

6.1.1 Engblom and Ellegård

A key monograph of the first half of this century exploring our question is Victor Engblom's 1938 review and analysis of the origin and development of *do* as an auxiliary. This was followed, in 1953, by Ellegård's work which built upon his predecessor's. Both of these present a wealth of evidence as well as a thorough analysis of the data and of previous attempts at unveiling the secrets of *do*.

One of their key findings is that periphrastic *do* (that is, what some modern authors would call 'dummy' *do*)

> first occurred in prose ca. 1400, gained ground slowly in the 15th and rapidly in the 16th century. In the 17th century the tide fell fast in affirmative declarative sentences, whereas the use of *do* became regular in negative and interrogative ones. The modern state of things was practically achieved around 1700 (Ellegård 1953: 157).

There is also clear evidence of a dialectal differentiation:

> The origin of the do-construction (...) has to be sought in the Central and Western parts of the South, from where it spread eastwards and northwards. All through the 15th century it is absent in prose works from the North, and

is rare in the East. In the 16th and 17th centuries the do-form continues to be used much less often in the North than elsewhere (Ellegård 1953: 164).

Ellegård divides his study into two questions: where did *do* come from? and, whence came the rules that now govern its use? Although both questions are of relevance here, it is principally the second one which attracts our attention. As for the origin, he proposes the "causative hypothesis" (1953: 118): this hypothesis claims that *do* + infinitive, very uncommon in the earliest texts, became the preferred form of causatives in the East and Southeast (as opposed to *make* and *let* in the West). Ellegård sees in the use of *do* and *make* as causatives a possibility of Latin or French influence. The latter would also have helped further the growth of *do x* in rhymed verse, during the second half of the 13th c. Although *do* was at first used in the North, there it was quickly replace by *gar* ('to cause, make, let'). "When periphrastic *do* had become well established in the South-Western verse texts, it began to appear in Eastern texts as well. Concurrently causative *do* lost ground to *make*" (1953: 118). Periphrastic *do* became "generally accepted in prose" in the 15th c., first in the West, later in the East and elsewhere.

Concerning the regulation of use in negation and interrogation, Ellegård summarizes the previous hypotheses thus:

1. Negative sentences are emphatic, and *do* was used to express this emphatic element.

2. The introduction of *do* made it possible to place *not*, or the subject of a question, next to the verb without separating the main verb from other modifiers, such as the object and some adverbs.

3. The more frequent use of auxiliaries made it unusual for *not*, or the subject of a question, to follow any verb but an auxiliary.

4. *Do* enabled the most important word — the verb — to take the place at the end of the sentence.

> 5. *Do* established itself in negative sentences because the language discarded word negation in favour of a 'synthetic' verb negation (1953: 154-5).

The first hypothesis is rejected on the grounds that the emphatic *do* appeared *after* the introduction of *do* in negation, the third because there seems to be no reason to suppose that auxiliaries were more frequent in negative or interrogative sentences than in other contexts. Ellegård's argument against the fourth is that the end of a sentence, from a point of view of rhythm and stress, is no different from the rest, and that "moreover, what justification is there for saying that the verb is the most important word?"[1] As for the last hypothesis, he says, it is not an explanation but merely a restatement of the facts (albeit a restatement that would deserve investigating).

Ellegård focuses on the second hypothesis as the basis of his research, since word-order claims are better substantiated through statistical analysis of the data. He explains that *not* cannot be placed before an inflected verb: "in my texts I have only a handful of prose examples, whereas we saw that about 25% of the *never* instances occur in anteposition even in Chaucer's time" (1953: 193). But

> in the 15th and 16th centuries there was a general movement of adverbs towards anteposition. As a result, lightly stressed adverbs became fixed in the position before the verb, whereas strongly stressed ones tended to endposition, after both verb and object. *Not* was originally a strongly stressed adverb, but has gradually lost its stress. It is probable that this process took place above all in the 15th century — at the same time as the particle *ne* was dropped (1953: 194).

This development caused *not* to "stand out as an exception", a situation remedied through the use of the *do* periphrasis by which mediation *not* could take its place in its allotted slot: after the auxiliary and before the main verb. "Thus the negative

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[1]To which objection one could reply that, since 1953, it has become an established point of theory (in many frameworks) that the sentence is built around the verb.

simple verb form came to be an anomaly in the language structure, whereas the do-construction fitted in perfectly" (id.). He offers substantial statistical support for this analysis (cf. p. 197 §2). "We may thus assume that the word-order SAVN [subject-adverb-verb-noun] was always felt as somewhat awkward. In negative sentences with a full finite verb it was thus almost necessary for the adverb to take post-position" (1953: 198–9).

Regarding the rise of *do* in interrogative sentences, word order, according to Ellegård, also plays an important role:

> One of the main inconveniences of inversion, as we found above, p. 190, was
> that the subject and the object both had to be placed after the verb. As
> in declarative inversion-sentences, we should therefore expect the do-form to
> be relatively more frequent in those questions where the simple verb had to be
> followed by both subject and object. In the first place, *do* should be less frequent
> in questions with the object placed at the head (object-question, o: *what said*
> *he?*), in the second place, it should be less frequent in adverb-questions, a (*when*
> *came he?*) and verb-questions, v (*went he?*), when the verb was intransitive
> (1953: 202).

Supporting this claim is the fact that "*do* was very considerably more common when the verb was transitive than when it was intransitive" (1953: 203).

There are nevertheless verbs that are slower to adapt to this state of affairs: for the negative sentences, the '*know* group', for the interrogative, *say* and a few other verbs, especially in the North (cf. 1953: 207n).

The principal problem I see with these studies is, and I've said this many times about diachronic explanations, that they fail to supply an ultimate systemic justification for the apparition of the ubiquitous use of periphrastic *do*. The historical steps from an earlier use of *do* to the present-day situation are made clear, but we do not get the underlying reasons for its use. Why did it become so prevalent when

it did? What is the important difference between English and other Germanic languages which could cause the former to have recourse to this auxiliary whenever one utters a non-assertive sentence?

This problem of the source of syntactic shift is rightly noted by Stein (whose work we will be discussing shortly, §6.1.3):

> This explanation assumes that it is something desirable for the language or the speaker to place the direct object immediately after the predicate verb. (...) Apart from other problems with word order based hypotheses, the latter semantic explanation falls within a broader explanation that also accounts for those cases of the use of *do* (around 60%) where no word order factor can be invoked — which is of course an insurmountable problem for a word order hypothesis. Nevalainen (1988) finds that in the *Book of Common Prayer* only 11% of all cases have an adverb between *do* and the verb (1990: 107).

6.1.2 Generativists

Lightfoot (1979: 45 ff.) links the development of this auxiliary use of *do* with the construal of auxiliaries, especially modals, as a historical process. He seems, however, unwilling to give a precise account of the evolution of *do*-insertion nevertheless proposing the following steps:

> one might argue that English had a phrase structure rule Aux $\longrightarrow$ T from the earliest times and that *do* was attached first to a T where there was no verb in the clause, then to any T (except before *be* or *have*), and finally only to a T not immediately preceding its verb (1979: 119n).

An interesting conclusion was drawn by Pollock, based on the views of Roberts (which in turn are in part a re-analysis of Lightfoot's findings):[2]

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[2]We will be addressing these analyses more fully in the next chapter.

I have implicitly attributed the present properties of Verb Movement [*i.e. do*-support, etc.] in English to the disappearance of a morphologically "rich" system of agreement inflection. In the terms adopted in section 3 and 4 a "rich" AGR can be "transparent" to θ-role assignment. Because English lost most of its verbal inflections, AGR became "opaque" to θ-role assignment whence the loss of its previous general Verb Movement to (AGR to) TENSE, which became restricted to *be/have* (1989: 418-9).

The arguments of generativists all revolve around the, almost universally accepted in their circle, notion that *do* marks the tense (hence its being placed under INFL or T) in any sentence where a verb movement occurs that does not involve another AUX (*be, have* or a modal). The need for such a movement derives from a change in parameter settings consequent upon the 'opacisation' of the English system of agreement. As this process is most often discussed in connection with the modals, we will be seeing it more thoroughly in the next chapter. But I should add that, contrary to the 'explanations' presented in the previous chapters concerning the infinitive and the progressive, there is in this view of things the sketch of a deeper systemic/psychological reason behind the historical developments. The analysis Pollock proposes could be paraphrased in this way: since some things were no longer marked on the verb itself, other means had to be used to compensate the growing generality (cf. Chapter III, 3.2) or, in Pollock's terms, the opacity to θ-role assignment.

6.1.3 Stein

Stein begins his monograph on the evolution of *do* with a cautionary remark on the limits of any scientific endeavour, especially as concerns the more or less conscious selection of data. Any researcher, he argues together with Hans Peter Dür, gets his data by using his view of things as a fisherman his net: what will be caught, *i.e.* what will or will not count as relevant data, depends largely on the type of net used, its

texture, etc. We cannot hope to arrive at one all-explaining truth for what is seen as relevant in one theory will be discarded in another.

And so it is with the history of *do*, Stein concludes. He does not offer one point of view on the origin of what is termed the "meaningless periphrasis" (where *do* does not seem to have any additional meaning) but a few seemingly opposite ones which he nevertheless manages to bring together. Two of those are seen as more important: the 'bottom-up' and the 'top-down' ones. The former, from Poussa (1982), sees the advent of meaningless *do* as a decreolized borrowing from Celt making its way from lower-class dialects to the Written Standard. The second hypothesis (from Denison 1985) takes the form from Latin and down from a "prestigious" tongue to the Standard:

> a semantic development from a perfective construction which includes causative *do* as one of the possibilities within the ambit of perfectivity, and, as the other possibility, meaningless periphrastic *do* as the result of a decreolized aspectual *do*, possibly plus another element such as *be*, such as is preserved in certain British and transatlantic dialects (1990: 21).

It is not in the origin of causative *do* that Stein's monograph leaves its mark but in the subsequent developments. In his view, the first and foremost factor is semantic: a shift (from perfective to epistemic) occurred:

> The positional arguments including inversion (...) highlight the opposition between a semantic and a syntactic approach: is *do* present "because" its function is to avoid inversion, on the assumption that this is indeed a problem, or does *do* appear in inverted or left-shifted structures because it marks semantic prominence as its basic meaning? This is exactly what left-shifting does (1990: 21).

Stein divides this evolution into three stages (preceding the present state of affairs): first there was a causative *do*, this then gave rise to an emphatic use, then a shift to the epistemic meaning.

In terms of semantics, the central processes were the appearance of the non-
causative, periphrastic *do* and the focusing on epistemic uses. As far as the
former process is concerned, a process of "democratization" was suggested as
the social breeding ground for a change of focus on agent plus perfective, in
addition to the possibility of the early existence of a *do* resulting from a Celtic
substratum. The next central semantic process is the shift towards epistemic
meaning (1990: 267).

As for this last process, he does not see it as an autonomous development but some-
thing which was triggered by a number of performance factors.

Amongst the facts lending support to his analysis is the distribution of use within
different genres. Periphrastic *do* is first found in "high" literature (including imitation,
quoting or parody thereof) then in courtly romances. Up to this point, there is a
parallel evolution in German with *tun*:

In der älteren früh-nhd. [früh-neuhochdeutschen] Literatursprache des 14.-16.
Jhs. begegnet periphrastisches *tun* + Infinitiv außerordentlich häufig. Durch
machen von der besonders 'kausativen' Funktion allmählich entlastet, erhält *tun*
einen zeitweilig großen Auftrieb als allgemeine Ausdrucksform der 'Aktionalität'
und 'Verbalität' (Erben 1969: 46, quoted in Stein 1990: 139-40).

Stein also observes that *do* is more frequent in rhetorical questions than ordinary
ones (1990: 82ff.), a fact left unnoticed in many of the previous analyses. Furthermore,
as would be expected if *do* support came through an epistemic meaning, it occurs in
negative sentences later than in interrogative ones.

One of the main reasons why English went one way with the development of *do*
whereas German did not with *tun* is that there was, in English,

a process induced by a subcategorically restricted and phonologically deter-
mined preference for using 'empty' *do* to avoid undesired endings (*edst, st, þ*).

As a kind of a catastrophic event pushing the development in a new direction,
this was reanalyzed as a subcategorically restricted meaning association of *do*
with questions, which triggered a generalization process that eventually led to
the modern Standard English result (1990: 267).

The figures given below (§6.2.1) point to a decrease of the use of *do* followed by
another rise. Whereas in German, there was such a decline in use, but there has never
been any subsequent increase. This is not to say that *tun* does not occur even today
as a mark of emphasis in some dialects, as in Saarland (a South-Western dialect of
which Stein is a native speaker) as these examples illustrate (from Stein 137-8):

(1) Ei *tust du nicht* deine Kappe anziehen?

     "Eh don't you put on your cap?"

(2) Morgens *tun wir* zuerst die Kartoffeln *schälen*, dann *tun wir* in die
     Kirche *gehen* ...

     "In the morning we always start by peeling the potatoes, then we go
     to the church"

(3) Geht der doch hin und *tut* ihm eine *runterhauen*

     "There he goes and slaps his face!"

(4) Er *tut nicht singen*, er *tut springen*

     "he does not sing but jump"

Usage here is mostly emphatic; in a way, it is as though *tun*, in these dialects,
had retained what it, and *do*, seemed to have had up until the end of the sixteenth
century without developing the other uses which make *do* so omnipresent in English
today. This would indicate that whatever it is that permits this widespread support
on the part of *do* was not so present before the 'drop-mark' but rather developed
later. The two increases we see in English (the fifteenth-century one and the one at
the beginning of the seventeenth century) would thus be due to two different sets of
factors.

6.2 Data

Unless otherwise indicated, all the examples below come to us *via* Engblom 1938. They all have been, whenever possible, checked against the direct (published) source to verify the context.

Due to the fact that *do* was much more usual in poetry, and this, supposedly for rhyme and rhythmic reasons, one has to be careful of data from this style. Nevertheless, such a use indicates that in the language of that time there existed a potential in the semantics of *do* and the syntax of the language to use this periphrasis. It could moreover be argued that before the Renaissance the language of poetry was freer, less confined by the dictates of the standard, hence often closer — that is, at that point in time, which may not be the case today — to the spoken tongue (cf. Denison 1993: 282).

But such a claim has to be substantiated by a comparison with more personal writs such as letters, transcribed testimonies, etc. to see if the pattern also occurs there.

6.2.1 The figures

The use of *do* in questions (both negative and affirmative ones) had a slightly higher increase rate than the use as a negative auxiliary. Figure 6.1 below presents the number of *do*-periphrases, as given by Ellegård (1953: 161). The upper broken line represents negative questions; the upper solid line, affirmative questions; the lower broken line, negative declarative sentences; and the lower solid one, affirmative declarative sentences.
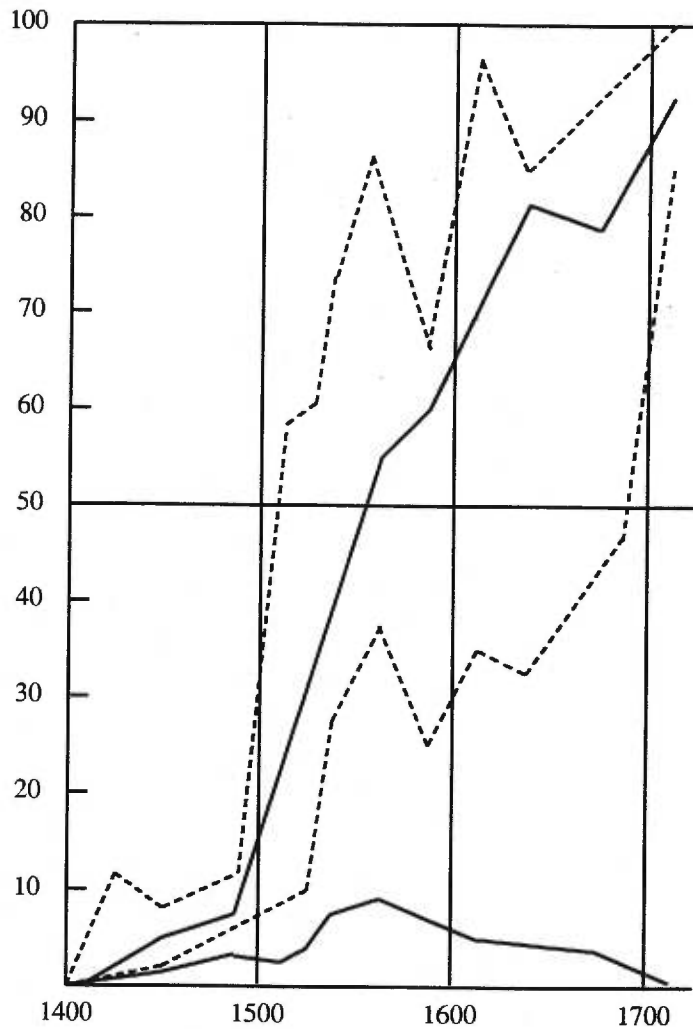
Figure 6.1: Relative use of *do* form.

6.2.2 *Do* in negations

The first example of [aux] *do* in a negative sentence comes from *The Early South-English Legendary* (EETS OS 87), from around 1280-90:

(5)   Seint scholace sori was ; "broþur," heo seide, "þin ore

     þis holie wordus so murie beoth ; ȝeot we moten telle more;

     ȝwane we In godes seruise beoth ; we ne *doz nouȝt* ore ordre breke.

     Ich am so feble þat ich ne wene ; neuer-eft more with þe speke. (p.198,

     1.23)

"This example stands quite isolated. In all other cases there are no *do*-forms in negative statements. A wish to make the infinitive a rhyme word has caused the writer to use a mode of expression, probably already used, perhaps common in everyday speech" (Engblom 1938: 128). He was not able to find any example from the 14th c. and only a few from the first half of the 15th. From 1410:

(6)   And þere it may not beu a-boute I-brought

     So all his lyf at ones forto gete,

     Yit in als moche as it endeth not,

     This lyf it *doth not* vtterly forlete. (*Consolatio Philosophiae*, 343/1–4)

All other cases of negation in this text are direct, as in the third verse (*endeth not*). As is usually the case in the negative with *do*, the particle *ne* is not present. Although by this time it is rarely present with direct negation (as is the case in present-day French), it is almost never found in conjunction with the *do* periphrasis.

The first prose instance found by Engblom comes from the *Ellis Letters* (1417):

(7)   And furthermore the mony which your sayd Leifteunent doth receive

     of your gratious Lordshipp for the safe keeping of this your land is soe

     little that it *doth not* suffice to paye so much unto the soldiers as is likly

     to mayntayne your warrs. (II, 1, p.61)

From *A Book of London English 1384–1425*, there is only one instance (from 1423-4):

(8)   These been þe names of þoo persones þat were preyed to the the same

     dyner yn þe day of þe seide acounte þe wheche were nought present

     atte seide dyner ne neyther *deden nought* heren þe same accountes.

     (181/1286)

(8)   These been þe names of þoo persones þat were preyed to the the same
      dyner yn þe day of þe seide acounte þe wheche were nought present
      atte seide dyner ne neyther *deden nought* heren þe same accountes.
      (181/1286)

Three other examples are given from the *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden* (translated
by Trevisa between 1432 and 1450) MS. Harl. 2261, Book I:

(9)   Neuerthelesse a dubitatcion may be movede probably in mony thynges,
      where certitude *dothe not* appere to be variante (p.19)

(10) Also there is a lytelle welle in the costes of Ruthlande, Tetengil by
      name, which *doth not* floo and refloo in the maner of a see (p.423f)

(11) whiche greuance *dothe not* cease tille that peace be reconsilede amonge
      theim (p.427)

Do picks up favour from the second half of the 15th c. onwards. From the *Paston
Letters*:

(12) Item, I have grete mervaylle that yong Jenney, whych ys of my Lord
      Cromewell councell, and Robert Ledam, also off hys councell, and hys
      man be not spoke with there, that they *doo not attaine* an accion ayenst
      Sir Thomas Tudden(ham) (132/ §6, Falstof)

(13) I asked licence to ryde yn to my contree, and my maistr *dyd not graunt*
      it (267/12-13, Wm Botoner)

Others examples are:

(14) and than he badde hym to kepe hym by him that the saisnes *did hym
      not hurte* ne diffoule (*Merlin*, 532)

where we find an intervening object between the auxiliary and the negation, and

(15) and a-noon that oon lete renne to that other, and smyten to-geder with
      grete myght, but thei *did not falle*, for bothe were thei of grete force
      (*Merlin*, 663)

(16)   By-cause that hyr warre *dyd not a-bate* (*Siege of Rouen*, 20)

(17)   *Nothyr dyd* he *laughe* nor smyle

Hys countenans *dyd* he *not a bate* (*Siege of Rouen*, 30)

(18)   Truly sayd syr Launcelot I trust I *do not dysplese* god.   (*Morte D'Arthur*, 857/31)

It is not however until the beginning of the 16th century that it becomes, in the written testimony, more common and even then, as Engblom points out (1938: 164), in only a third of the corresponding MnE cases. This figure however is not as accurate as that, cf. fig. 6.1. It could be argued that at the time these were two competing forms: direct negation and use of *do*, in which the latter was gaining ground.

6.2.3   *Do* in questions

"There are very few examples before the year 1400" (Engblom 1938: 145). The first example of auxiliary *do* in a (direct) question formation was found, ca 1380, in *Sir Ferumbas* (EETS ES 34). Although the "old type" of question form is usually found, there is this instance:

(19)   Wan Agolafre haþ herd hym speke, For angre þat he ne drast him wreke, A skuntede als a bore: —

"Go out of my siȝt," to him he sede, "*How dost þou*, harlot, þyn erand bede? & seo þou me no more... (l. 3887 ff.)

And then there is this (in)famous example from the *Canterbury Tales* around the same time:

(20)   His yonge sone, that three yeer was of age,

Un-to him seyde, "fader, *why do ye wepe*?

When wol the gayler bringen our potage,

Is ther no morsel breed that ye do kepe? (Chaucer, B 3621ff.)

This case has been much discussed and there are two facts we have to point out:

primo, the speaker is supposed to be three years old; *secundo*, Chaucer never uses *do* elsewhere to make a rhyme, relying instead on *gan*. Some linguists have used this example, mainly the fact that it is a child who is speaking, to infer that the use of *do* was already common in this context in the spoken language but had yet to greatly mark the written one. This is rather slim evidence. But coupled with the fact that the periphrasis started gaining some ground in interrogative sentences shortly after Chaucer wrote these lines, what this hypothesis infers is a distinct possibility. The examples below illustrate the growth of this use of *do* in question formations during the fifteenth century:

(21)   *Doth* any thing this craftys-men *compell*,

       Or any of this werkes canst þou tell. (*Walton* 278/4)

(22)   "A syr," seyd I, "than *where do ye dwell*,

       In heuen or in erthe outher elles in hell?" (*Lydgate*, Ass. of Gods,

       (c.1420) I. 32

Note that although the *do* in (22) could have been used for rhyme, this denotes the existence of a potential for the periphrasis.

(23)   Beryn stood al mwet, & no word he spak.

       "Beryn," quod the Steward, "*doist þow sclepe or wake?* (*The Tale of Beryn*, I.2147)

(24)   "Good sir," quod this Geffrey, "*why doe yee void(e) me?* (*The Tale of Beryn*, I.2147)

Two cases of negative questions can also be found, side by side, in *A Fourteenth Century English Bible Version* (quoted by Langenfelt, Sel. St.: 12):

(25)   Y-hereþ, my dereste frendes, ne ches noȝt God pore men in þis worlde,

       & ryche me in feiþ, & heyres of þe kyngdom, þat God haþ by-hoten to

       þilke þat loueþ hym? & haueþ vnworchuped þe pore man. & *ne doþ*

       noȝt þese ryche men þoroȝ hure myȝt þruste ȝou adoun? & *ne doþ noȝt*

       þei blaspheme þe ȝoode name þat is y-cleped on ȝow? (James 2:5–7)

6.2.4 Distribution

Dialectal spread

The distribution of evidence suggests that there was a spread of periphrastic *do* from South to North. Furthermore, according to the figures given in Ellegård (1956: 44ff.), the Northern dialects 'acquired' very lately the uses of *do* we are discussing. Not surprisingly, many Scots dialects do not use it in certain types of constructions.

Paradigm

When the *do* periphrasis became established in the language, it occurred with pretty much every verb. There are nevertheless a few which were more resistant to its support, as we have mentioned above (§6.1.1). They are, for the negation, verbs with a meaning of knowledge (*know, wit, care, reckon, say*, etc.) and for the interrogation, *say* and the like.

It has been noted that *do* and *ne* do not co-occur in negative sentences. By the time *do* was becoming more present in the language, *ne* had already been on the decline for some time, and nearly dead (cf. Frisch 1995, 1997, and below §6.3.2). In the *Cely Letters*, no author uses it. In fact, they rarely directly negate a full verb, (e.g., by using verb + *no* + object instead of verb + *not* + *any* + object); in a hundred letters there are maybe fifteen to twenty instances of a directly negated full verb, as in:

(26) ther com not better myddyl woll (Richard II, 91/16)

(27) Alsoy syr, I forgeet not your hawkes (J. Dalton, 125/36)

It is a legitimate question then to ask whether there is a connection between this decline and the rise of the *do* periphrasis? In a way, some writers have already made this connection by saying that when *not* took over for *ne*, concurrently with the shift of the adverb to the left, something had to be done to palliate the problem thus

created. This is the point of view advocated by Ellegård, and subsequently rejected by Stein.

Ellegård gives statistical 'evidence' that this is what is happening in ME, the problem with this analysis is that even if the numbers were 'telling the truth' (which has been noted to be false anyway), it does not give a source for the change, but only illustrates a co-relation between changes in the VP and the rise/use of the *do* periphrasis. That two facts co-vary does not necessarily entail that one derives from the other. It could also be that they are both influenced by the same factors. No amount of number crunching will give us a good analysis of the origin of linguistic behaviour. But Ellegård's hypothesis may yet prove useful.

6.3   Reanalysis or, why *do* today?

As can be seen from the analyses presented in the first section, there are three main types of explanation proposed to account for the MnE status of *do*: the early 20th century one which gives us a view of the changes from emphatic/causative to periphrastic *do* but no systemic solution; the generative conception of the loss of agreement (due to a lack of transparency of the system and/or a change in word-order patterns); and Stein's language contact and phonological considerations. But what of the subject of this thesis, namely, the *Korrel shift*? What is its place here?

6.3.1   A tentative hypothesis

For the *shift* to be in some way responsible for the development of *do* support the change in δ would have to create a situation where it was no longer efficient to use full verbs in a non-declarative way. For example, if one considers the duration of the event as having no actualized portion, as being all-virtual, then is it possible to negate or question this event? Is it possible to see something virtual as being, on top of this virtuality, 'not there' or 'possibly there or not' or, to put it in other terms, to

have its incidence to reality severed?[3]

Here again, one could argue, English was faced with an expressive demand no longer bearing after the *Korrel shift*, and had recourse to a subterfuge. As such, auxiliary verbs were not too much affected by the change in δ; we have defined auxiliaries as representing general (empty) temporal spaces, existential conditions applied to the supported event (Chap. I, 1.3.4, cf. also appendix A.4). The conditions they express could still be conceived as being questioned or negated. Whence the introduction of a new auxiliary: *do.* When one uses *do* in a negative context, the existential condition of the infinitive event, and not the event itself, is negated, denied existence. In interrogatives, the condition is posed as possible, to be defined.

As has been noted (§6.1.1), not all 'full' verbs acceded at the same time to *do-*support, some verbs waited until as late as the 18th (or even 19th) century: *know, wot, care, doubt, intend, mistake, question, ask, think, say.* They are, the reader will notice, the same type of verbs which kept a continuous use of the simple present (cf. Chap. II, 2.4.2); they express intellectual events which would be one of the reasons behind their slow change.

One important point remains to be addressed for this hypothesis to be complete: why *do* is limited to the indicative when the subjunctive and quasi-nominal moods can still negate directly. But there is an important difference between direct negation in the indicative and these moods: in the former, the negation marker (*not*) comes after the verb ("I have not seen him"); in the subjunctive and quasi-nominal, it comes before, e.g. "I suggest that he not come tomorrow".[4] This implies that what

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[3]This raises the problem of languages with a future tense, like French, which obviously can negate a future event, an event not having occurred yet. But the reader will recall from Chapter I (§1.3) that tense only places the event in universe time, so that the inside of the event time is not influenced by tense.

[4]Such a difference in the position of the negation marker is indicative of a different regimen of incidence (as is the position of the adjective with regard to the substantive in French, cf. Valin 1981: 64ff., Bouchard 1997) and no doubt hinges on what is being negated. The difference in this case would be between negating the event itself and negating the relation from the event to the support

prevents direct negation in the indicative is related to the nature of this mood. The actualization of a $\delta(\alpha)$ event would, if the hypothesis holds, be 'undeniable', as it were.

Before going any further, however, we should pause to answer a number of questions raised by this hypothesis. We should also check it with some of the facts presented above. The main problem here, and the most readily observable one, is that this account does not fit with the data on the development of the *do* periphrasis. It is a well-documented fact that the use of *do* in interrogative and negative sentences came from Southern dialects and spread northward (to this day, it is not so present in Scots dialects, cf. Wilson 1915: 125). Recall that the *Korrel shift* originated in more Northern parts of the country and progressed southward, thus in the inverse direction.

Neither can this account justify the differences we can observe between language registers. In fact, these differences show the opposite of what one would expect from the hypothesis: one should have the *genus humile* as the first to accept the *do* periphrasis, as it is closer to colloquial language. In fact, as Stein pointed out, both the upper class and the lower class developed aspects of the use of *do* and spread them to the rest.

As for the theoretical basis, it is somewhat weak. There is no reason to expect $\delta(\alpha)$ events to be less susceptible to non-assertiveness: were this the case, one would not be able to have a negative or interrogative sentence with an infinitive since the infinitive represents an unactualized event. And it does not answer the question of the others uses of *do* not involving non-assertiveness, but still using inversion.

(the subject in the case of the subjunctive).

6.3.2 A new hope

Another point of view on the present-day use of *do* may shed light on the history of this form. In a 1997 article, Hirtle presents *do* in a new and interesting fashion, based on the precepts of the Psychomechanics of language. Argument is made for seeing auxiliary *do* "as a space for the prospective realization of the event" (1997: 121); that is to say that *do*, having been dematerialized to a high degree,[5] comes to mean or represent only an empty stretch of time in which to put a verbal event — overtly (as an infinitive) or suggestively. This analysis in a way ties in with Warner's vision of *do*: "From the late fifteenth century *do* expresses tense and mood within a unitary lexical item" (1993: 224) *i.e.* it expresses an empty stretch of event time. Hirtle, however, does not go so far as to say that "in this way *do* and affix are like allomorphs of a single category" (Warner 1993: 225).

As for the use of *do* as support for interrogative sentences, Hirtle gives the following explanation:

> As such, DO provides a means of treating the virtuality of an event which is far more satisfying than that found in earlier stages of the language. For example, in the archaic *comes the King tonight?* the event is represented in the indicative, and hence as really existing, before being hypothesized by leaving its incidence to the subject unrealized [through inversion]. One can see from this that DO came into use in questions (...) because it provided the answer to a problem of representation posed by interrogative sentences: the incongruity of first representing an event in the indicative as real and then hypothesizing it. DO was introduced to represent the conditions of actualization of an event — its place in space and time (1997: 131–2).

In other words, this 'opaque' *do* becomes the locus of the interrogative inversion, of the relation between event duration and person, leaving the infinitive to express the

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[5]That is to say that it has lost most of its 'material', *i.e.* the semantics that makes it what it is. Dematerialization here is more or less equivalent to 'bleaching of meaning'.

lexical dimension of the event. In a way, we see a separation of the grammatical significate used for inversion (*do*) and the lexical significate (the infinitive). That is not to say that the infinitive lacks grammatical meaning, but that this significate is not the one participating in the inversion in the indicative mood.

Along similar lines, an argument for the presence of the auxiliary in negation is offered:

> Whatever is to be negated must first be represented, and here a problem similar
> to that of interrogatives arises: how to represent an event in order to negate
> it. To avoid the conflicting impressions involved in representing an event in
> the indicative in terms of reality and then declaring its nonreality by negat-
> ing it, English resorts to DO + infinitive. The infinitive permits the speaker
> to represent the event as merely virtual, with both options open — actual-
> ization/nonactualization. This in fact captures better the impressions arising
> from the experience to be expressed because "a denial ... is always a response
> to an implied possibility" (Reid, 1991: 10). Thanks to NOT the event's non-
> actualization option is attributed by DO to the subject (1997: 132).

This analysis of the MnE situation raises an interesting, even fundamental, question: why were speakers of earlier stages of the language not so 'affected' by these incongruities? Why was it possible to use direct negation and interrogative inversion with 'full' verbs for so long before getting into *do*-support? Part of the answer lies in the fact that, at the beginning of the OE period, there were no auxiliaries as such (cf. Bélanger 1995b: 14ff., in appendix) and so it was not possible to have recourse to such a subterfuge. But later on, when auxiliaries occurred more frequently, why wasn't *do* used?

Another, maybe more important portion of this answer is found in the evolution of the English negation 'markers', *ne* and *not*. According to data presented in Frisch (1995, 1997), *not* was not use as an independent negator prior to *ca.* 1150, and it

was not until after 1360 that it succeeded in supplanting *ne* in this role. *Ne* had been the negation marker for quite some time, often in conjunction with adverbs such as *never* or, at the time, *not*. From the end of the 12th c. to a little after 1450, a drastic change occurred in the use of both markers (cf. table 6.1).

Period	ne	ne ... not	not
1150–1220	64	35	1
1220–1290	61	36	3
1290–1360	44	45	10
1360–1430	4	15	81
1430–1500	1	0	99

Table 6.1: Percentage of use in declaratives (Frisch 1997: 32)

Now, it is to be expected that *ne* did not bear the same relation to both the verb and the subject as *not* now does; they do not have the same semiology (obviously) or the same patterns of use:

> Old English *noht* is an optional reinforcer of the Old English sentential negator *ne* with the interpretation 'not at all' or 'not that way' (Jespersen 1917; Mitchell and Robinson 1992). Evidence for the status of *not* as a sentence adverb in Middle English comes from the parallel syntactic distribution of *not* and *never* during the first 70 years of the Middle English period (1150-1220) (Frisch 1997: 34).

Presumably, *ne* did not have the event represented as real before negating it. But with its (rapid) demise, it felt more and more incongruous to represent the event as real in the indicative before negating it; the auxiliary *do* was then called into play to repair the situation. We can see by a comparison of the numbers given in Frisch and those in Ellegård (cf. fig. 6.1, that negation through the use of *do* started when *not* had become, to all intents and purposes, the sole negative marker, *i.e.* at the end of the 15th century (a fact already noted in Ellegård).

That *not* was for a time placed before the verb would indicate that negation with *not* (after the verb) was felt to be incongruous; by placing it before the verb, the incidence was more or less sufficiently different to make direct negation by *not* bearable. For that time, in the dialect that used it, preverbal *not* was felt as a 'full' replacement for *ne* and was used accordingly. But the nature of *not* still had something strange about it in this role and so was abandoned to the benefice of *do not*.

As to the reason behind *do* in interrogative inversion, it could be a case of analogy, both with the use of the auxiliary in negations and with the growing use of auxiliaries in the language.[6] This view is close to that advocated by Warner (1993: 219 ff.).

We must also bear in mind the fact that, prior to the reduction of morphological complexity in the verb system, the relation between the verb event and the subject was not the same as it is in present-day English. Before the demise of the morphological person, this one was directly inside the verb; as personal endings tended to disappear, person came to be represented more and more outside. It is then quite possible that there was no need for the mediation of *do* at a time when person was represented within the verb event. Such a mediation would indeed be strange since the incidence is already in part realized by the personal affix.

In a strange kind of fashion, this agrees with Pollock's analysis, were his put in other terms. Indeed, it could very well be argued that "the disappearance of a morphologically 'rich' system of agreement inflection" in English led to the ubiquity

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[6]There is a parallel which could be made with another linguistic phenomenon, the increased use of the article. As was argued in Bélanger 1995b, there is a parallel in the advent of auxiliaries and of articles, both based on a generalization of the mother system (respectively, the verb and noun systems). In a way, *do* support is a form of obligatory AUX, as in the case of the obligatory ART in French. Is there then a parallel between those two developments?

Obligatory ART in French is not the result of a greater generalization of the noun phrase (after the falling below the five-case line) since the English noun is less openly marked than its French counterpart and English still has zero-article in many cases. This would be an interesting area of inquiry.

of *do* through a growing incongruity of full verbs towards negation or interrogative inversion in the indicative mood.

Conclusion

These last comments are only tentative explanations and since they do not affect the conclusion concerning a possible relation between the rise of *do*-support and the advent of the *Korrel shift*, I will leave these questions open, for now. Suffice it to say that, to all intents and purposes, there has been no relation established between the shift and *do* insertion in Modern English. Both the data (especially as concerns the spread of the form — from the South northward, instead of in a southward fashion) and the theoretical assumptions speak against such a relationship. The facts presented here concerning *do*, and auxiliaries in general, will nevertheless be of use in the next chapter, as we will address the problem of the modal auxiliaries in English.

Chapter 7

Auxiliaries II: Modals

Do I join or do I founder
Which can is the best I may?

Peter Hammill

Introduction

A special peculiarity of the Modern English verb system, also concerned with auxiliaries, is the existence of a more or less separate class of **modal** auxiliaries (*can, may, will, shall, must* and their past forms).[1] These verbs exhibit many characteristics that are peculiar to them and to no other English verb: they have no third person singular inflection (although, until its demise, they bore the mark of the second person singular -*st*); there is a reduced semantic difference between their present and past tenses; they never take *to* before the following infinitive — even if the infinitive event is seen as coming after their event (cf. Chap. IV, 4.1.3), e.g. "It will rain tomorrow." They also differ from their Germanic counterparts (German *können, mögen, müssen*, etc.) in that due to an absence of quasi-nominal forms (or subjunctive, in many cases) they are never found in sequence, in the progressive form or in the perfect.

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[1]There are also uses of *dare* and *need* that will be examined.

There is much discussion as to when these particular characteristics of the MnE modals came to be, even more as to how. But it can assuredly be said that the modals are more distinct from other verbs in MnE than they were in OE.

The most important contribution to this question was that of Lightfoot (mainly 1974, 1979) which we will be discussing at length, as well as those following in his footsteps. After having presented these accounts, we will look at the data, focussing on the characteristics of modals in OE and ME, and we will close with a reanalysis from the point of view of the *Korrel shift*. But first, let us look briefly at what differences there were (or not) between OE and MnE as regards modal auxiliaries.

7.1 The Old English ancestors

One of the problems we will be addressing is the status of modals in OE *vis-à-vis* the other verbs: were they full verbs or auxiliaries? were they like the other transitive (or intransitive) verbs, or did they constitute a syntactically distinct class (and if so, up to what point) or only a morphological (and semantic) class?

For one thing, it is clear that some of the characteristics distinguishing modals from other verbs in MnE — direct negation, verb–subject interrogative inversion, no mediation of *to* before the infinitive — were in OE shared by all verbs, as has been noted in the previous chapter. But there are other, more important features to examine: the existence of non-finite forms (and consequently the possibility of using modals in sequence or in the perfect) and the possibility of having complements other than infinitives (clauses, noun phrases, etc.) or no complement at all.

Most of the recent analyses of these verbs hinge on whether they constituted, at earlier stages of the language, a separate category of words or not. From this starting point, we can discuss whether what occurred happened to a special class of linguistic objects or whether it *created* that class. It is, however, an important point of fact

that, with the notable exception of *willan*, these verbs were already morphologically distinct, being formed on the pattern of the preterit of strong verbs.

> En effet, on constate que dans le petit groupe de verbes que nous étudions, *l'expression du présent* est portée par une formation comparable à celle qui sert à l'expression du *passé* dans la grande masse des verbes primaires du *germanique*, la formation dite de "prétérit fort" : même degré apophonique de la racine, même type de désinences de personne (Tellier 1962: 7).

The preterit tense of Germanic languages was, in turn, taken from the Proto-Indo-European perfect: "The massive ablaut evidence of the strong verbs of Germanic, however, not only shows the validity of [this] line of descent, but also gives valuable evidence of how the three aspect system of late PIE becomes the two tense system of Germanic" (Hewson 1997: 155, see also Warner 1993: 140). Apart from, but still close to, this morphological group, *willan* did not come from the preterit form of a strong verb but acquired some of the particulars of this morphology (after the dropping of final -*e*, it had no third-person mark, a preterit-present-like second person -*lt* and a new past form in -*ould*). As Warner explains, "It looks like a synchronic preterit-present, if it is interpreted as an endingless form in which -*e* is part of the stem (as I think is plausible)" (1993: 142).

He further notes that the preterit-present group is of considerable antiquity, being found with essentially the same properties and membership in all the Germanic language. "A second point worth noting about this group is that it is semantically restricted, being particularly rich in 'stative' verbs, appropriately enough given its origin in a perfect whose 'psychological emphasis lay on the state attained' (Prokosch 1939: 188)" (1993: 143).

7.1.1 Warner

In his (1993) monograph on auxiliaries in English, Warner sketches a more thorough view of the characteristics of these verbs in Old and Middle English. There are two properties of pre-modals (or, in his words, 'group-A' verbs) that are not very much discussed in other accounts but are brought to our attention by Warner. From the evidence gathered (1993: 111–21), it not unwarranted to conclude that most auxiliaries occurred in OE, or at the least in ME, in contexts of ellipsis (cf. §7.3.2).

Citing five arguments in its favour (1993: 121–2), Warner proposes the hypothesis that "the elliptical constructions exemplified above are interrelate, and their occurrence is a grammatical property of specific lexemes: a potential auxiliary group, including *don*" (1993: 121).

As with ellipsis, there is a good number of 'group-A' verbs that occur in impersonal constructions like:

(1) hine scael on domes dæg gesceaminan beforan gode (*Wulfstan Hom.*,
     238.12, cited in Warner 1993: 123)
     "he [lit.: him (acc.)] shall at Doomsday be-ashamed before God"

A third feature Warner presents is the complementation with plain infinitives. This is a usual argument, but where Lightfoot uses it as a property distinguishing the modals in late ME/eMnE, he goes deeper and traces it to Old English. Starting from the figures given in Callaway (1913), he concludes that "avoidance of *to* in an infinitive complement was a remarkably restricted property in Old English, certainly by late Old English as the incidence of *to* increased.[2] Occurrence with plain infinitive only is found with verbs of 'sense perception', with *hatan* and *lætan*, and with verbs of group A. Elsewhere variation or the *to*-infinitive is the norm" (1993: 137).

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[2] His statement to the effect that "At some point *to* is interpreted as an infinitive marker" (1993: 136), the reader will have understood, is plainly rejected by this author. It would also seem to contradict Warner's own position, since he overtly accepts (1993: 12, 64) Pullum's (1982) analysis of *to* as an auxiliary.

Furthermore, if we make a distinction between verbs in which the semantic subject of the infinitive is the same as that of the finite verb, and those in which there is a different subject involved, the verbs in 'group A' stand out even more. Within the former group, where there is a shared subject, virtually only the ancestors of the modals are found to consistently avoid the mediation of *to*.

Although this is still the case in ME, there are instances where a *to* infinitive follows a modal. But only where this verb is non-finite, where there is a complement occurring between modal and infinitive, or when the infinitive is the second of a coordinative structure.

We could also briefly mention the ability of some of these verbs to have a procliticized negation (*n-*) attached to them. This occurs with auxiliaries beginning either with a vowel, or with a [h] or [w] which is dropped, as in *nill* (*ne will*), *nis* (*ne is*), *nart* (*ne art*) or *nabbe* (*ne habbe*). Some of these auxiliaries, however, are never found with procliticized *ne*, like *agan* and *weorðan*. And since most modals begin with a consonant, this feature is not of great importance.

7.2 Previous analyses

Most of the studies on the history of English modals done prior to the 1970's were principally concerned with the semantico-lexical evolution of these verbs (cf. Jespersen 1949 IV, Tellier 1962, Visser, etc.) and so did not tend to touch upon the question of how and when this class of verb came about. Nevertheless, such studies as that of Tellier (1962) give us a good insight into the evolution of the complementation patterns of the various OE modals, as well as a good view of what semantic characteristics made these verbs special, as early as the OE period. To this we can add the data furnished in Visser's great opus (1973), which, despite its occasional errors, gives us a good view of the use of the various verbs and structures interested by the question. And as such, we will be using them in the discussion of later analyses.

7.2.1 Lightfoot

Within Generativist circles, as well as amongst historical linguists from other backgrounds, Lightfoot was one of the first to set upon studying as a whole the various changes which seemed to bring about the creation of the modal auxiliaries as a special class of verbs in English. As Warner points out, "We must agree that modals undergo considerable change in ENE [sc. eMnE], and Lightfoot deserves credit for calling attention to it" (1983: 200). Lightfoot gives a series of changes affecting the verb system and the preterit-present verbs in particular, and aims at determining what happened and which changes brought about what.

> This then was the first stage of the story. Five independent changes took place which had the effect of isolating the pre-modals as a distinct class: (i) loss of all the direct object constructions with pre-modals, (ii) loss of all the preterit-presents except the pre-modals, thereby isolating the latter as a unique inflectional class, (iii) increased opacity of the past tense pre-modals *might, could, should, would* and *must*, (iv) special marking of epistemic pre-modals to avoid otherwise expected SVOM or *it* M[NP ...]$_s$ structures, (v) the development of *to* infinitives with almost all verbs except the pre-modals (Lightfoot 1979: 109).

These changes then had the effect of setting these verbs, which in OE "had no characteristic peculiar to themselves" (id.), apart from the rest of the verb system. This setting apart, by virtue of the Transparency Principle — for a more opaque situation had arisen — had important effects on the system. From this point, a series of changes occurred, following the build-up of opaque features in the modals (as summarized in Denison 1993: 238):

1. they become a new lexical category

2. a new phrasal category AUX is created as a sister to V

3. there is a reformulation of the negation and inversion rules

4. the modals lose their infinitives

5. they lose the *-ing* form

6. they can no longer follow each other

7. they can no longer be used as perfects

There is then another roughly simultaneous series of transformations: the loss of the negative form V + *not*; the loss of inversion with full verbs; and the appearance of 'quasi-modals' such as *have to, be able to* or *be going to*.

Lightfoot's analysis has the great merit of setting up a holistic view of linguistic change and, as he himself said, "I have not 'proved' anything here (...) but a radical re-analysis of pre-modals, the kind suggested here accounts naturally for the simultaneity of the seven changes taking place in the sixteenth century, and (...) it also permits an *explanatory* account of the historical changes" (1979: 113). There are, unfortunately, some important flaws and factual errors in his account, especially as concerns the timeframe of the changes. Let us take each of these changes, which Lightfoot claims were concluded in the 14th century, in turn and see to what degree they concord with the available facts.

Loss of direct object

In the OE period, we find some instances of pre-modals followed by a direct object most of them being either with *cunnan* or *willan*. Both these verbs retained direct objects until very late, *can* with the sense of 'know' being found in a few instances in the 15th c. The *will* which can still be found with objects ("he wills it") is not the auxiliary, but comes from another verb which became confused with it; we also find *would* with complement clauses up until the 19th c., as in

(2)   *Would* now St.Paul would come along that way (*Moby Dick*, 303)

As for the other modals, except for two instances of *mæg* in the OE period, direct objects are quite rare even before 1500 (see below, §7.3).

Loss of non-pre-modal preterit-presents

"The truly remarkable thing is that all the non-pre-modals of this class [preterit-present verbs] were lost" Lightfoot says (1979: 102), giving afterwards the example of *witan* which had survived but not with the usual preterit-present inflection. But of course they would not have survived. When they did survive, they either became modals, or regular verbs (cf. Scots *ken*) which through analogy would fast have acquired the standard third-person-singular inflection as the verb system became semiologically simpler. That this had the effect of 'isolating' the modals from the rest of the English verbs is a bit hard to defend since being preterit-present verbs in OE, they were already set apart. Hence nothing new had come about.

Increased opacity of the past tense

It is true that there is a greater 'opacity' in the past tenses, but the question one must ask is whether this is a source or a consequence. We must not discount the possibility that semiology follows meaning in verb forms, and thus one could expect that verbs having a preterit form in the present would have a less marked difference between the past and the non-past senses. Lightfoot argues that "the relations of *shall/should, will/would* and *can/could* are rarely based on a distinction of tense" (1979: 104). Here he seems to confuse tense and time; we have to remember (cf. Chapter I, 1.1.3) that the past/non-past tense distinction does not necessarily imply a distinction of time. It is more a question of precedence, be it temporal, spacial or logical. In the case of the modals, it seems to be more often logical, but that is not to say that other verbs cannot use their past tense as a marker of logical antecedence. It is, after all, a question of meaning. So this is not a question of opacity, but of semantic difference. Still it could be counted as a factor. But it may also, as we will

see, be the consequence of another change.

Special marking of epistemic pre-modals

This argument is based on a particular analysis of epistemic modal structures said to differ from deontic or root modal structures. It is, however, very much encamped in theoretical assumptions which have less factual basis than we may be led to believe (see below, Warner's response).

No *to* infinitives

Visser situates the final obsolescence of plain infinitive from 1500 (cited in Lightfoot 1979: 110). But examples from the 17th c. can be found:

(3)   almost as bad, good mother, as kill a king and marry with his brother.
      (*Hamlet* III, iv, 28-29)

Here again, it might be the consequence of something else. I refer the reader to Chapter IV, for a full discussion on the subject of the infinitive with *to*. By the 16th c., the absence of a *to* before some verbs wasn't quite as conspicuous as today — and even today, verbs of perception and verbs like *help* are still often found without a mediating *to*. And as we have seen pre-modals already favoured *to*-less infinitives.

Concerning the effect of the creation of the new class of modals, here also the dates are not so well concordant. To begin with, it is natural for the two first effects to be simultaneous, since grammatical meaning and syntax often go hand in hand. But the changes themselves, as stated, are purely theory-based. Dependent upon the claims made through the hypothesis presented that pre-modals weren't different from other verbs and that there is an AUX node, sister to V.

What about the change in the rules of inversion and negative placement, which are seen as another consequence? As this change has already been discussed in the previous chapter (§6.3.2), I refer the reader to it.

The next four changes one would expect to be more or less simultaneous, as they all amount to saying that the modals lost their non-finite (or, in Psychomechanical terms, their quasi-nominal) forms. But as the data show, there are only marginal cases of pre-modals in non-finite form in OE.

As for the third series of changes, taken to be a consequence (more or less concurrent) of the preceding ones, the dates concur even less: the loss of V *not* negation is completed only in the 18th to 19th c. (with residual fixed expressions like 'I think not' or 'You know not what awaits you') and so is SV inversion with core-stative verbs (cf. Chapter II, §2.3.1).

The appearance of 'quasi-modals' may be a consequence of the previous changes. But the fact that *be going to* finds an almost parallel construction in the French *aller* future tells us that it might have happened otherwise, at least for one of them.

Critics

Most of the arguments against Lightfoot's analysis were aimed at the supposed dates of the changes and what they entail; for the most part, they run along similar lines to the comments I have presented. For instance, Plank "observes that epistemic and perhaps deontic modals have *never* taken NP objects in English; that epistemic modals have *never* had non-finite forms; and that modal + object NP was confined to restricted uses of certain modals with notional meanings (1984: 310–11, 314)" (cited in Denison 1993: 329). Another point that is raised is that modals never had a passive form, which is strange for transitive verbs as Lightfoot claims they were. Subsequently, however, new analyses or variations on Lightfoot's hypothesis appeared.

Warner's (1983) review does not reject Lightfoot's analysis, but draws attention to some of its more important failings, while acknowledging the need to continue the research.

After having discussed at length and argued against the notion of TP, Warner reviews Lightfoot's account of the history of the modals, focussing on two problems: "Lightfoot has, however, overstated his case both for the exceptionality of ME modals, and for the simultaneity of the ENE [sc. eMnE] changes" (1983: 195). He discards the 'loss of object' feature on the ground that not only *can*, as Lightfoot notes, but also *will* (and its preterit *would*) and *may* occur in eMnE with an object — thus after the time expected from Lightfoot's account (*i.e.* during the ME period). "It can hardly be treated as a predisposing factor, or as an 'exception feature' uniting the class of 'premodals' and increasing their irregularity in late ME" (1983: 196).

Concerning the word order change (feature (iv) above), Warner argues that no distinction between epistemic and root meaning as regards syntactic behaviour is observable in OE:

> Lightfoot's account apparently involves the implicit claim that epistemic senses of modals are attested in SVOM order in ME (presumably until late ME?) and are in this distinct from root senses, which are not found in this order. But he does not seem to regard the claim as important and makes no attempt to substantiate it, though any such claim would need to be demonstrated (1983: 196n).

There is no basis for treating the two senses as different and positing a word order change, in D-structure.

As for the other three exceptional features (seen as (ii), (iii) and (v) above), the absence of nonfinite forms is not complete, according to Warner, in all dialects; the past/non-past distinction was less opaque in eMnE than it is today; and "the morphological isolation of 'premodals' is brought about by the loss of other preterit-present verbs which presumably represent a decline in exceptionality within the grammar" (1983: 197). And so it "seems clear that the level of exceptionality in 'premodals' *c.* 1500 is lower than Lightfoot claims" (id.).

Concerning the cataclysmic change which ultimately depends on the simultaneous loss of non-finite forms in the 'premodals', although Warner rightfully acknowledges the fact that something major has happened to the modals, he goes on to point out that these changes are not at all simultaneous. *Shall* and *must* (*mōt-*) are not found in either OE or ME as non-finites, and *will* is longer to lose them than *can* or *may*.

> We may also note here that without the simultaneous loss of nonfinites there
> is no justification for Lightfoot's claim that an analysis of PE modals as verbs
> with a defective paradigm is inadequate on historical grounds, since this claim
> is based on the supposed simultaneity of the loss (115, 130n) (1983: 198).

Another critique of Warner concerns the idea that the eMnE difference between modals and verbs is essentially the same as in present-day English. For one thing, they agree with their subject (as the use of *-st* shows) secondly, verbs in eMnE still accept interrogative inversion and direct negation with *not* (cf. fig. 6.1 on the spread of the use of *do*). As for the three further changes which Lightfoot presents as 'natural' consequences (1979: 111), they do not, Warner points out, lend much support to the account.

7.2.2 Roberts

In a 1985 article, Ian Roberts argued for a more up-to-date variation on the analysis presented by Lightfoot, leaving the TP aside. Roberts' point is that verbs have to be "v-visible".

> At this point, we introduce a further condition on θ-role assignment which is
> central to what follows:
> (17)   V assigns θ-roles iff V is governed.
> Condition (17) holds at S-Structure. (...) "Governed" positions in (17) include
> both syntactically and morphologically governed positions (1985: 29).

This condition, combined with other syntactic forces, has the effect of depriving modals of θ-role assignment as their lack of agreement (hence of morphological government by an affix), made them appear in an ungoverned position (INFL).

The main change occurring between OE and eMnE is that when English went from a morphological to a word order agreement system, the V-visibility condition wasn't met anymore in modals. This had the effect of placing them in a different position, within a slightly changed syntactic structure, as we can see in figures 7.1 and 7.2.
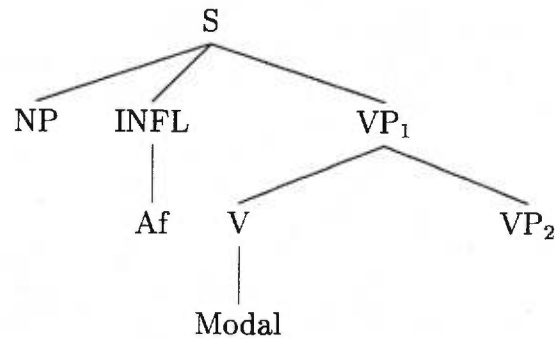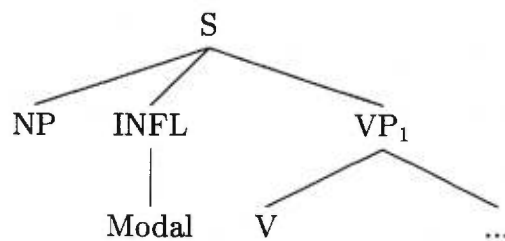

Figure 7.1: OE/ME structure

Figure 7.2: MnE structure

In effect, only auxiliaries (modal or otherwise) could now move to INFL. The changes which led to this transformation are stated as follows:

(i)   The use of modals as functional substitutes for the moribund system of subjunctive inflections

(ii) The morphological irregularity of the modals

(iii) The phonologically motivated obsolescence of agreement inflection.

The first factor meant that modals were interpreted as clausal operators specifying the mood of the clause, exactly like subjunctive inflections. Clausal operators do not assign θ-roles (...) the second factor made it appear that modals lacked agreement (...) the third factor led to the resetting of the agreement parameter (Roberts 1985: 34).

There are many problems with this presentation. There is, of course, the case of what would be considered 'movement to INFL' in core-stative verbs up until the 19th century. As for the factors leading to the parametric change, it is hard to see how *can* or futural *will* "specify the mood of the clause" and why the subjunctive still remains in English, albeit with (mostly) zero morphology. Secondly, until the demise of the second person singular, modals retained person agreement ('thou canst'), and still have tense agreement (after a fashion). As for the "phonologically motivated" changes, I refer the readers to my many comments to the effect that phonological change in morphology is overrated.[3]

Another point Roberts makes, one already sketched out in Lightfoot, concerns adverb placement:

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[3]Concerning the parametric change in itself, Roberts exposes it thus: "Now imagine a parameter P with the potential values [+F] and [-F]. For concreteness, take P to be the agreement systems and [+F] to be morphological agreement, with [-F] therefore syntactic agreement" (1985: 56). From the evidence heard, the speaker sets this parameter one way or the other. The question one must ask is, why posit such a (presumably genetically given) parameter? In language, one marks relations either by the placement of the words, or by their form (or both). Is there any other way? Since there are anyway only two logical possibilities, this parameter becomes pointlessly redundant, not to say, hard to justify from the point of view of evolutionary biology. Furthermore, what would be the values of P in ModFr, where both the systems are used?

Similar reasoning may well explain why adverbs stopped appearing between a tensed verb and its object in the sixteenth century. (...) If we take the *X*-position in (37) [directly under S, between INFL and VP] as the position of adverbs in such cases, then the sentences where the adverb intervenes between verb and object are just like those with floated quantifiers. The disappearance of V-movement to INFL as a consequence of the change in agreement parameter entailed the disappearance of sentences like those cited by Lightfoot [**he wrote well the poem,* * *he touched lightly her shoulder*] (1985: 49).

In Chapter I, we discussed the notion of incidence, mentioning the case of the placement of adjectives in Modern French; the relation between adjective and noun is, *mutatis mutandis*, the same as the one between adverb and verb. In MnE, adjectives come before the noun they are incident to, and so the adverb with the verb. In this case, it is the full verb to which the adverb is usually incident.

7.2.3 Lightfoot again

In his 1991 monograph on parameter settings and language change, Lightfoot revised, in light of the previous analyses, his (1974, 1979) position:

So I revise the earlier account by claiming that two major changes were involved. First, the changes in the distribution of the modal verbs, completed by the sixteenth century, reflected a recategorization in the lexicon as instances of INFL. Second, the late-seventeenth-century change in the distribution of verbs reflected the loss of their ability to move to INFL. This refines the account of Lightfoot 1974 and 1979 but retains its essential features: in each case I invoke changes that are purely syntactic in the sense that they consist of a recategorization and the loss of a particular (V-to-INFL) movement operation (1991: 144).

These stages are more or less those presented in Warner; in the first one, the modals become "inflectionally distinct after the loss of other preterit-present verbs"; the past–present dichotomy becomes "non-temporal in certain senses" (1991: 142) and the modals never gain the ability to accept the mediation of *to* before the infinitive. This change tells Lightfoot that the modals are now generated under INFL, which is also "manifested by the loss of their nonfinite forms and their direct object" (id.).

The second stage of this syntactic restructuration is the loss of direct negation and interrogative inversion for full verbs which "seems to have been completed only at the end of the seventeenth century, significantly later than the loss of the nonfinite forms and direct objects. (...) Also ceasing to occur, and thus providing further evidence for this structural change, are forms in which a tensed verb is separated from its direct object by an intervening VP adverb" (1991: 143).

As we see here most of the same arguments as in Lightfoot 1974 and 1979, I refer the reader to my comments on them. But perhaps some additional comments are in order. First, contrary to Lightfoot's claim to the effect that "after the general simplification of verbal inflection, the surviving members of this class were inflectionally distinct, lacking the distinctive third-person-singular -*s* ending. Furthermore the surviving members of this class [of preterit-present verb] were the premodals, which had not been inflectionally distinct" (1991: 147), the modals *were*, in OE, morphologically distinct, being preterit-present verbs. This may not have been so important at a time when there was great morphological variation than in MnE, but still, they had that remarkable feature of being, formally speaking, past forms. As for the obscuring of the past meaning, it is an important characteristic of the verb system of English, as well as that of many other languages, that the relation between tenses is not always temporal in nature.

Discussing analyses taking a semantic point of view, Lightfoot has this comment:

They point to the particular meanings that the premodals had in association with direct objects, and they note that these meanings were lost: *sculan* meant 'have to pay', *cunnan* 'know', and so forth. However (...) the loss of these meanings (...) was entirely a by-product of the recategorization: once *shall*, *can*, etc. were classed as INFL, they could not occur with direct objects, and consequently the meanings they had in association with direct objects were automatically lost (1991: 148).

This is very interesting as it shows that his hypothesis solves many problems at once. There are two important facts in this passage — the loss of objects and the generalization of lexical meaning — to which we will return in the last section of the chapter. Lightfoot thus restates his claim for the first stage of change: "it is reasonable to hold that it was the morphological changes of (12) that led to the recategorization. These changes had the effect, in many ways accidental, of making the premodals into a small and distinctive class" (1991: 148).

As for the second stage, it has amply been discussed in the previous chapter (§6.1.1) where it was noted that the change is not so clean-cut, as we find many examples of direct negation or interrogative inversion with full verbs up to the 19th century.

Concerning the loss of non-finite forms, I refer the reader to the discussion from Hirtle (1997), presented below (§7.4.4), as to the incompatibility of certain auxiliaries and the quasi-nominal forms. Still, as modals did sometimes occur in non-finite for in Old and Middle English, Hirtle's would fain be an argument for the reanalysis of modals as auxiliaries, albeit from a more semantic point of view.

7.2.4 Warner again

Another important study on the history of the modals in English is Warner's recent (1993) monograph which refines the views presented in earlier accounts (by Warner as

well as by Lightfoot, Roberts and others). In it, he paints a picture of the ancestors of the modals as being, already in OE, a distinct subcategory of verb, which was to become, in eMnE, a separate class of words. His account is encamped within HPSG and is much more oriented towards the formal,[4] and lexical, properties of the modals than the syntactic structure to which they are appended.

The analysis revolves around the concept of word classes which "are defined by the correlation (or mutual predictability) of properties which stand in opposition to similar correlations for other classes, (...) formal properties are of especial importance in such correlations" (1993: 132). One of the more important steps of the study is then to identify any such correlation of properties that could delineate the ancestors of the MnE modals and establish them as a distinct sub-class of verbs, even during the OE period.

Warner gives the following properties for the "prototypical" verbs which were to become the modal auxiliaries in early English (although these properties have been more or less discussed in the previous sections, Warner presents them as the basis for considering 'group-A' verbs as a particular sub-class):[5]

A.   Occurrence in ellipsis like the modern post-auxiliary ellipsis and pseudo-gapping.

B.   Occurrence within impersonal constructions where the subordinate verb controls the case of the nominal arguments.

C.   Restriction of some of these words to finite forms.

D.   Use of past-tense forms without past-time reference, outside a motivating context.

E.   Subcategorization for the plain infinitive, not the *to*-infinitive.

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[4]What Warner calls 'formal' properties of words is, in most aspects, translatable into the Psychomechanical view of the grammatical side of the significate (cf. Chap I, 1.1.3).

[5]Three other properties, which are not considered satisfactory as distinctive features, are presented: the procliticization of negative *ne* into *n-*, failure to occur as the antecedent to pro-verbal *do*, and word order patterns involving 'verb raising'.

     F.   preterit-present morphology (1993: 103).

There is an interesting point which Warner makes about impersonal constructions of the sort presented above and its relation to ellipsis: "despite the fact that these two properties are apparently independent of one another, there is a considerable overlap in membership of 'ellipsis'-group verbs and I-verbs" (1993: 133, cf. table 7.2 below). This correlation seems to argue in favour of the view of word classes presented above: "the preliminary conclusion must be that there was already in Old English a striking correlation of properties" (1993: 134).

Warner reanalyzes the timeframe of the opacization of past tenses in favour of a more spread out view. Although "the loss of straightfoward reference to the past for particular senses (...) mainly belong[s] to the Modern English period after 1500" (1993: 150), this opacity is not limited to that period. For one thing, "*should* (etc.) had ceased, at least sometimes, to be semantically compositional with a meaning derived as '*shall* + past + subjunctive' (or '+ indicative') and become an entity in its own right, with a partly independent semantics."

Caution should be used here, since, as has been said earlier, past tense forms do not necessarily refer to past time, they may also refer to some other form of antecedence (logical or even spatial). This objection, however, does not discount the fact that, were that feature to be considered distinctive, it would have to be from an earlier time than what the other analyses usually present.

As Warner had already remarked in his review of Lightfoot (1983), the absence of non-finite forms is already a noticeable characteristic for *sceal* and *mōt*-in the OE period. Two things are of particular interest here: the development of previously nonexistent non-finite forms for some verbs in ME, and Warner's justification for the non-occurrence of non-finites.

Concerning non-finite forms of 'group-A' verbs, Warner gives the following table

of occurrence (7.1). Important developments within the quasi-nominal mood which

OE form	Old English			Late Middle English		
	Inf.	Pres. ptc.	Past ptc.	Inf.	Pres. ptc.	Past ptc.
cann	+	-	+	+	+	+
dearr	-	-	-	+	- 15c	
mæg	+	+	-	+	+	+
mōt	-	-	-	-	-	-
mun				+	-	-
sceal	-	-	-	-	-	-
þearf	?+	(adj.)	-	-	-	-
wile	+	+	-	+	+	+

Table 7.1: Non-finite forms of preterit-presents (Warner 1993: 145)

seem to have escaped Lightfoot's and Roberts' attention are effected after the OE period. The infinitive of MAY is first recorded in the middle of the eleventh century, the infinitive of DARE and past participles of DARE, MAY and WILL appear in the course of Middle English. As evidence for the nonexistence of infinitive *may* during the OE period, Warner cites Ælfric's grammar (ca 1000): "He gives forms of *queo* '*ic mæg*', but remarks of the future participle *quiturus* that 'we know no English for it' (ÆGram p. 252) though he commonly glosses future participles with 'will or shall' plus infinitive" (1993: 102).

Warner accounts for the non-occurrence of non-finite forms along a more or less lexical line. Briefly, his view is that "the items involved are interpreted as having subjective uses in which the contribution of indicative mood is opaque" (1993: 189). This implies that indicatives and other forms of the modals are noncompositional; if a modal occurs in the subjunctive mood, then this is a nonce backformation. The same analysis applies, indeed would explain, the appearance of infinitive of *may* at the beginning of the Middle English period.

The view presented is further supported by the relative independence of the past-tense forms; since there is opacity in mood, tense is probably affected, and if the items are noncompositional, then it is to be expected that the past/non-past distinction become blurred. This feature is lexically restricted to verbs of subjective modality — "which denote necessity, obligation and related notions of futurity" (1993: 147 (3)) — a notion we will be discussing presently.

That preterit-present morphology is of great antiquity and that it concerns a semantically restricted group of verbs (cf. *supra*, §7.1) implies, in Warner's eyes that there was from the earliest time, a relation between preterit-present morphology and "nonprototypical verbal semantics" (1993: 143). This implication is important from the point of view of word classes, since it places these verbs, already before OE, in a particular subclass, with correlations of formal and semantic features.

A further set of characteristics is of importance to Warner's analysis; they concern the modals as bearer of *subjective modality* (1993: 157ff.). This stems from the fact that they typically affect propositions, or events, as a whole, usually in utterances indicating the speaker's judgement or will. Their meaning revolves around modality issues: necessity, probability, possibility, obligation, permission, futurity, volition and intention. This could be summed up by saying that they express "conditions of potentiality" (Hirtle 1997: 122). Being so characterized, as we have seen before, the modals become removed from indicative semantics, losing their morphological compositionality.

All the particular features discussed by Warner are summed up in table 7.2, with attention to the period in which they occur.

From these numerous characteristics, Warner establishes 'group-A' verbs as a distinctive subclass of verbs (1993: 154–4). They have specific formal (grammatical semantics) properties that set them apart from the rest of the verbal part of speech. Hence his speculative history where two important forces are at play: (i) the decline of

Verb	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
can	(OE)(ME)		+	+		?ME	
dare	OE,ME		+	+		?ME	
may	OE,(ME)	OE,ME	+	+		ME	(OE)ME
mot	OE,ME	(OE)(ME)	+	+	OE,ME	ME	OE,ME
mun	ME	(ME)	+	+			(ME)
owe	ME	ME!	+/−	−		ME	
shall	OE,ME	OE,ME	+	+	OE,ME	OE,ME	OE,ME
þarf	(OE),ME	OE,ME!	+	+			
uton	(?)OE		+	+	OE,eME		OE,eME
will	OE,ME	OE,ME	(OE),ME	(+)		ME	OE,ME

Legend: A = use in ellipsis; B = impersonal constructions; C = synchronic preterit-present; D = no *to* with infinitive; E = only finite forms; F = Opaque preterit; G = Potential subjective modality.

Note: *mun* does not occur in OE, and *uton*, not in late ME.

Table 7.2: Properties of 'premodals' (Warner 1993: 186)

of the oppositions of mood and (ii) the 'independent focussing of the developing group' (1993: 194).

> Contemporaneously another kind of development took place. Some preterit-present verbs typically occurred in utterances expressing a subjective deontic (and epistemic) modality, so that they were fully compatible with such subjectivity (though they may indeed have tended initially to occur with it because they offered an indirect or potentially objective form of expression). Then this is reinterpreted as a lexically encoded property (...) In Old and Middle English (i) and (ii) continue as long-term pressures which motivate the increasing focus of the class. There is a gradual development in which further properties characteristic of the class emerge and the individual properties become clearer in themselves and better as mutual predictors (1993: 195).

This account has the value of being more concerned with meaning than Lightfoot's or Roberts'. Even more so if we consider that what Warner situates within the realm

of 'formal properties' could be taken as part of the grammatical significate of these words. Although clearly tentative, the historical development Warner presents implies conceptual processes more than purely syntactic ones and will be of great use in the discussion on the possibility of *Korrel* inteference.

7.3 Data

As stated in the introduction to this chapter, the data are divided into five sections, each presenting data relevant to a particular side of the modals. Many of these examples have been oft cited as evidence (by Visser, Lightfoot, Warner, etc.) and they are mostly reproduced from Denison (1993: 298ff.), although many other sources have been consulted.

7.3.1 Modals with the infinitive

Old English

In Old English, we find many instances of 'pre-modals' with either epistemic or deontic meaning. Amongst the examples of epistemic meaning, we find the following:

(4) And hi ða eealle sæton, swa swa *mihte* beon fif ðusend wera. (*ÆCHom* I 12.182.15)

"And then they all sat, maybe five thousand men."

(5) ðu *scealt* deaðe sweltan. (*Gen* 2.17)

"thou shalt surely die."

(6) Wende ic þæt þu þy wærra weorþan *sceolde* . . . (*Jul* 425)

"thought I that you the more wary should become . . ."

(7) wen is, þæt hi us lifigende lungre *wyllen* sniome forsweolgan (*PPs* 123.2)

"It is likely that they will swallow us at once"

Middle English

It is the contention of Goossens that 'in Middle English clear epistemic example are difficult to find' (1982: 78, cited in Denison 1993). He cites only four such instances.

(8) Sone hit *mæi* ilimpen (a1225 Lay. *Brut* 2250)

     "soon it may happen"

(9) And if þou wynus it mai not be Behald þe sune, and þou mai se (*CursM* 289)

     "and if you think it may not be, behold the sun and you may see"

(10) Vr neghburs mai þam on vs wreke (*CursM* 11963)

     "our neighbours may themselves on us avenge"

As for 'root' or 'deontic' meanings, they are very common in Old English, as in these examples:

(11) & he æfre hine ofersuiðan *meahte* (*Mart* 3 178.41)

     "and he was never able to overcome him"

(12) þu *scealt* on æghwylce tid Godes willan wercan (*BlHom* 67.33)

     "you must at each time God's will perform"

As Denison remarks,"root meanings continued, of course throughout ME, though there were gradual changes of meaning for several of the modals" (1993: 303).

7.3.2 Modals in ellipsis

There are many examples, in Old and Middle English, where the auxiliary is not followed by an infinitive, but where that later is understood from the linguistic context.[6]

(13) forðy is betere þæt foeh þætte næfre losian ne *mæg* ðonne þætte *mæg* & *sceal.* (*Bo.* 11.25.24)

     "therefore better is the property which can never perish than that can and will."

---

[6]The examples in this section, as well as their translation, were furnished by Warner 1993: 112–3.

(14)   Wenst ðu þæt se godcunda anweald ne mihte afyrran þone anweald
       þam unrihtwisan kasere, ... gif he *wolde*? Gise, la, gese; ic wat þæ he
       mihte gif he *wolde*. (*Bo.* 16.39.30)

       "Thinkest thou that the heavenly Power could not take away the empire
       (from) that unrighteous Caesar, ... if he would? Yes, O yes, I know
       that he could, if he would!"

(15)   & cwædon þæ hie þa burg *werian wolden*, gif þa wæpnedmen ne
       dorsten. (*Or.* 194.12)

       "and said that they [= the women] would defend the city, if the men
       dared not"

(16)   deofol us *wile ofslean* gif he *mot*. (*ÆCHom* i.270.10)

       "the devil will kill us if he can"

(17)   hi ... gearowe wæron ehtnysse to ðoligenne. and deað sweltan gif hi
       ðorfton (*ÆCHom* ii.78.212)

       "they ... were prepared to undergo persecution and to suffer death if
       they needed."

This property of the modals of auxiliaries in general, in fact) continues throughout
the Middle Ages and is still present today, as the translation of the previous examples
show.

7.3.3   Modal without an infinitive

Amongst the use without direct complement (be it object or infinitive) there are the
cases with directional adverbials (such as *out, to, of*, etc.) which can be found in OE,
ME and eMnE (esp. in Shakespeare). There are also instances of intransitive *shall*
or *may* (see Visser §§176–7).

As for the instances of modals with direct objects, most of them are cases of *can*
(with the sense of 'know'), *will* (which is hard to differentiate from full verb *will* except

in the preterit) or *shall* (meaning 'owe'). The only other clear cases found are:

(18) Wel þæt swa *mæg* (*Bede* 2 1.96.23)

  "That may well be so"

(19) ðuhte him on mode þæt hit *mihte* swa, þæt hie weron seolfe swegles brytan, wuldres waldend. (*Sat* 22)

  "It seemed to them that it might be the case that they were themselves governors of heaven, rulers of glory"

These two examples are with *swa*, implying an understood verb 'be'.

(20) For all the power thai *mocht* (c1470 Henry, *Wallace* III.396 (*OED* s.v. *may* v.¹ B.1b)

  "for all the power they had"

There are also instances of a modal with *it* or *that*:

(21) 'That *shall* I nat,' seyde sir Dynadan ((a1470) Malory, *Wks.* 696.27)

The other examples given in Denison and others are all from 1534 onward. It is interesting to see that it is still possible in the 20th century to do such a thing:

(22) "We should have pulled down the screen," whispered Arrietty. "We *should* that," agreed Pod. (1955 Norton, *Borrowers Afield* xviii.323.4)

Cases of *will* and *may* introducing *that*-clauses can also be found. Whereas it is, from a present-day English point a view, acceptable (although felt to be a bit archaic) to use *would* (cf. example (2)) or non-modal *will* in such a construction, *may* there now feels less at home:

(23) Ac þæt hie *magon* þæt hie þas tida leahtrien (*Or* 74.25)

  "but all they can do is blame the times"

(24) Hwa *mæg* þæt he ne wundrie swelcra gesceafta ures scyppendes (*Bo* 92.7)

  "who can help wondering at such creations of our Creator"

Notice that both these examples are taken from translations. But such complementization is to be expected if the OE modals are like other verbs.

7.3.4 Non-finite forms

This is dealt with by Visser (1973: §§1649–51, 1684–7, 1722–3, 1839, 2042, 2134). Here are some examples from Denison (excluding *can* 'know' and *will* 'want'):

(25) þatt I shall *cunnenn* cwemenn Godd (c1180 *Orm.* 2958)

"that I shall have the ability to please God"

Arguably, this instance could have more or less the meaning of "that I shall know [how] to please God".

(26) And whan ye wole go withoute me ye shul wel *mown* avaunte yow (c1450 *Pilgr.LM*(Cmb) 1.467)

"and when you will go without me [*sc.* Reason] you shall well be able to be boastful"

(27) yf we *had mought* conuenyently come togyther ye woulde rather haue chosyn to haue hard my mynde of myne owne mouthe (1528 More, *Wks.* VI 26.20 [107 H7])

(28) some waye yᵗ appered at yᵉ first *to mow* stande the realme in great stede (id. (1533) IX 84.4 [855 C1])

(29) I fear that the emperor will depart thence, before my letters *shall may* come unto your grace's hands. (1532 Cranmer *Let.* in *Misc.Writ.* (Parker Soc.) II.233 (*OED* s.v. *may* v.¹ A.1β)

(30) *Mayinge* suffer no more the loue & deathe of Aurelio (1556 *Aurelio & Isab.* (1608) M ix (*OED*))

The other examples given by Visser of MnE instances are concerned either with *can* or with *will*.

7.3.5 Impersonal uses

One facet of the pre-modals (or 'group-A' verbs) which Warner brings to attention as being important in their sub-class status is the possibility of being used in impersonal constructions.

Old English

(31) *Mæg* þæ þonne ofþyncan ðeodne Heaðobeardna ond þegna gehwam þara leoda þonne he ... (*Beo* 2032)

"The lord of the Heathobards and each nobleman of the people may regret it when he ...

(32) Nu *mæg* eaþe getimian, þæt eower sum ahsige, hwi ... (*ÆLet* 2 (Wulfstan 1) 147 122.11)

"It may well be that one of you will now ask, why ..."

(33) Hu *wolde* þe nu lician gif (*Bo* 142.2)

"how would it please you now if ..."

(34) þæt we þa þing don þe us to ecere hælu gelimpan *mote* (*HomS* 25 412 (*OED*))

"... that we do those things which may lead to eternal salvation for us"

What may be interesting to note in this last example is that *mote* seems to be in the subjunctive mood, something which has become somewhat rare.

(35) ... ðæt us ne *ðurfe* sceamian (*HomM* 5 (Willard) 57.6)

"that we need not feel shame'

(36) ... hine *sceal* on domes dæg gesceamjan beforan gode ... swa þam men dyde, þe ... (*HomU* 37 (Nap 46) 238.12)

"he shall feel shame before God on Judgement Day ... as did the man who ..."

Middle English

(37) grisen him *mahte* þet sehe hu ... (a1225(?c1200) *St.Juliana* (Bod) 51.551)

"He who saw how might feel horror."

(38) ne *schal* hime þurste neuere. (a1300 *þo ihu crist* 85.24)

(39) Vs *schal* euer smerte (a1300 *Sayings St.Bede* (Jes-O) 83.336)

"to us it shall ever be painful"

(40) Ne *þurhte* þe neuer rewe, *myhtestu* do þe in his ylde (a1300 *A Mayde Cristes* (Jes-O) 96)

"You would never need regret putting yourself in his protection"

(41) *Mai* fall sum gast awai him ledd, And es vnto þe felles fledd (*CursM* 17553)

"Maybe some spirit led him away and he has fled into the hills."

(42) Him *may* fulofte mysbefalle ((a1393) Gower *CA* 1.457)

(43) Hym thar not nede to turnen often (Chaucer *BD* 256)

(44) Hym *wolde* thynke it were a disparage To his estate (Chaucer *CT.Cl.* VI.908)

7.4 Reanalysis

Before proceeding to reanalyze the data presented, a few details have to be attacked. We will first try to ascertain what facts in the various accounts can be held to the light and not melt away, which ones could hold out in linguistic court as undisputable. After that we will have the chance to meet two eccentric fellows who are quite important to this study and deserve more than the meagre footnote I have so far given them.

A final step before moving on to the *Korrel-shift* oriented analysis will be to discuss

the notion of grammaticalization. In a final section, we will address the mysteries of the double modals and attempt to furnish a satisfactory explanation for their particular behaviour, from the point of view of our reanalysis.

7.4.1 The facts of the matter

So, what are the undisputable facts concerning the history of the modal auxiliaries in English? They never took the third-person-singular -s ending, but did bear the second-person -st; they never had to before the infinitive; their meaning took on a more abstract, general hue; they, albeit rarely, took direct objects (and indirect ones in impersonal uses); they used to have non-finite forms — even though they were not so common as that of other verbs; they came, except for *will*, from preterit-present verbs; they form in MnE a special class of words; and, there were more preterit-present verbs in OE than there are modal auxiliaries in MnE.

The changes modals underwent did not come about all at once. They are spread out over some period of time; but the loss of non-finite forms is all but complete at the end of the 16th century and most other preterit-present verbs — in most dialects at least — are lost or replaced around the same time.

7.4.2 Orphans of the analyses

An aspect of the question we have not yet addressed concerns two special verbs, two Quasimodos in the esthetic picture Lightfoot wanted to paint: *need* and *dare*. These verbs sometimes act, at least in part, like modal auxiliaries (with no third person ending, no *to* before the infinitive, direct negation, etc.). They do so exclusively in non-assertive contexts,[7] as the following examples show:

(45) It's a gamble. I alone *dare take* the risk. I can't involve you or anyone

   else. (Asimov, *Forward the Foundation*, 70)

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[7]That is, negative and interrogative sentences and some types of affirmative declaratives cf. Duffley 1992b and 1994.

(46) Then, at the end, he will be asked about the flier and he *need not answer* a word. He *need* only *laugh*. (*Forward the Foundation*, 104)

(47) recklessly making me ready to do what in my own proper natural heart,
      I *durst not* so much as *dare*. (*Moby Dick*, 508/25-7)

This last example is a bit of a strange one, as *durst* and *dare* are used consequently. Indeed, in the cinematographic version (written by John Huston and Ray Bradbury), Ahab, the speaker of these lines, says: "what I dare not even dream of".

(48) Who *would dare do* such a thing?

(49) I live in the black woods where you dare not even speak my name

It is interesting to note that not all characteristics of the modals are necessarily present at once, as in

(50) Who's afraid of him, except the old governor who *daresn't* catch him
      and put him in double-darbies (*Moby Dick*, 317/13–15)

where we find a third person singular -*s* with the negative, or

(51) Kill my boss? *Do I dare* live out the American Dream? (Homer J.
      Simpson, *Halloween Special IV*)

where *dare* with a bare infinitive is used with *do*-support.

The interesting thing here is just that: that not all features are linked. This reflects the evolution of the modals, where not all things came on at once. Lightfoot explains the spread of the changes as transformations: one affecting the modals themselves (now generated under INFL), the other the whole verb system (loss of V-to-INFL).

The evolutions of the two verbs are as mirror images: *dare* was, in OE, a preterit-present verb: it acquired, in ME, non-finite forms, a third-person-singular -*s* and the use of *to* with infinitive. *Need*, on the other hand, was a full verb in Old and Middle English, but around the 16th century it began to acquire modal characteristics.

The existence of such verbs as *need* and *dare* (only one of them historically a preterit-present) throws more light on the problem at hand. The fact that their exceptional behaviour is (in part) dictated by the semantic nature of the context (as the examples from non-assertive affirmative sentences show) indicates that the various motivations behind the modal characteristics are at least partially a matter of event conceptualization — that is, some of these must stem from the grammatical meaning of both the modal and the sentence.

That the changes in the behaviour of the modals and the verb system is in part a matter of grammatical semantics lets us understand better the reason behind the time-spread — why the modal auxiliaries were already a bit apart from the beginning and why some changes were long in being completed. It may also eventually throw some light on the mystery of the double modals (see below, §7.4.5). Conceptual problems in a language are often dealt with in a piecemeal fashion, and with new solutions sometimes being long in coming (cf. the *do* solution).

7.4.3 On grammaticalization

Warner devotes one of his later sections to the discussion of the notion of grammaticalization where he presents the usual claim (concerning words that become morphemes), saying that it "typically means that it [sc. the word] is reduced in form, restricted in distribution and generalized (perhaps 'bleached') in semantics in the process" (1993: 195). This point of view, I have argued elsewhere, should be reversed: it is the semantic generalization that brings about both the restriction in distribution (as it should be evident that the distribution of a form is directly linked to its meaning), and the reduction in form (as pairs like ModFr *aller* as full verb *j'vais* and auxiliary *m'a*, demonstrate).

Warner goes on to discuss Brinton's view on the semantic basis for grammaticalization which she says "is initiated by a semantic shift (...) the syntactic actualization

or realization of this semantic change proceeds gradually, and the syntactic changes are a consequence, not a cause, of the earlier semantic reanalysis" (1988: 237). According to Warner, in the case of the modals,

> the initial development of lexicalized subjectivity in some items must be related to their nonprototypical morphology, which is surely relevant at the point of reanalysis of finites: the opacity is a morphological as well as semantic fact. And the syntactic property of ellipsis is present from the earliest time for which we can expect evidence. So, while semantic developments are clearly crucial, they do not have the clear-cut independence and priority apparently envisaged by Brinton (1993: 196).

The non-occurrence of non-finite forms is also a mark of auxiliary *do* and has a semantic basis, see Hirtle's comment (below, §7.4.4). Morphology is, in some ways, ancillary to (grammatical) semantics, since morphemes have meanings.[8] As for ellipsis, it is not so much a "syntactic property" as the syntactic realization of a semantic one. The possibility of ellipsis ultimately depends on the meaning (lexical and grammatical) of the word in question; that it was already present in earlier times does not discount it as a factor which, combined with some other semantic shift, brought about the reanalysis. It is clear that semantics does not have the independence Warner has Brinton giving it, but its importance should not be so played down so.[9]

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[8]To put it in another way, the addition of a particular morpheme to a word changes, sometimes in subtle ways, its grammatical meaning.

[9]Traugott said, on the subject of linguistic change: "there is no such thing as 'pure syntactic change' ..., where reference is made exclusively to syntactic rules, and not at all to either semantic or phonological factors" (quoted in Lightfoot 1979: 100). To this, Lightfoot answers that "the initial structure of English modals presents us with a case of pure syntactic change, a change affecting only the syntactic component" (100). But the point made by Traugott is not that the change only affects syntax, but that it is not possible to have no consideration of semantics or phonology. In the case of the English modals, these were already semantically different from other verbs.

7.4.4 Enter K

From the point of view of the *Korrel shift*, three particular features of the modals stand out:

- They are preterit-present (which explains why no third-person *-s*: in the past tense, only the second person singular was marked);

- They never take *to* before the infinitive;

- Their past/nonpast distinction is weakened.

Starting from the middle: the non-occurrence of mediating *to* presumes, if we follow Duffley's account (Chap. IV, §4.1.3), that they are never felt to be coincident with the event expressed by the infinitive. *To* is used to mark distance between the event expressed by the finite verb and that of the infinitive (or, alternatively, to give more distance to the infinitive event); that it never occurs with the modals implies that either they can only be coincident to the infinitive event, or that they, *per naturam*, never are.

We know that modals express conditions imposed on the following infinitive: "the modal auxiliaries focus on various conditions of potentiality and with regard to these conditions the infinitive event can be seen only as something potential" (Hirtle 1997: 123). Furthermore, this event need not be realized (*he can speak* does not mean that he *does* speak), hence we know that the two events (the one expressed by the modal, weak in meaning as it might be, and the one given by the infinitive) are not coincident, leaving us with the second possibility: modals never are, because of their nature, coincident with the infinitive event.

In discussing the third point, the opacity of the past/nonpast system, I have remarked (§7.2.1) that in *if*-clauses past tenses are used to mark not a temporal antecedence, but rather a logical one, *i.e.* a condition. Since modals express conditions in either past or non-past form — albeit of a different hue — it is to be expected that

there be less of a difference between tenses. Mind you, this is not because the past has become more of a nonpast, but the other way around. Well, that is not entirely true: if we look at the first point, preterit-present morphology, we see that there was already a touch of past in the pre-modal present tense. It is nevertheless fair to say that it has grown to be more that just a touch. And as we have already said, semiology often follows meaning, so one should expect such a behaviour in preterit-present verbs.

But in OE, as well as in other present-day Germanic languages, the past/nonpast distinction is still stronger, in preterit-presents, than in MnE. So something did change in English, something that made present forms more like (*if*) pasts and also prevented these verbs from being coincident with infinitive events. At this point, the question we can ask ourself is: what would happen if a pre-*Korrel-shift* (*i.e.* a $\delta(\omega)$) conception of the event were used in MnE? The event would have a 'feel' of the past, of the partly accomplished. Could this be what we are observing in the modals?

But is this possible? is it reasonable to propose such a hypothesis, and under what conditions can one do so?

There is nothing as such to prevent this, although the verbs to which this *un*change happen would have to already possess a certain quality of outstanding features setting them apart from the rest of the verb system. They would have to be, morphologically, syntactically and semantically, distinct (cf. the 'core-statives' of Chap. II, §2.3.1 or the '*know* group', Chap VI, §6.1.1). As Warner has argued, this is the case for this 'group-A' verbs. In such a situation, a $\delta(\omega)$ would have to be, in one way or another, specified within the verbs themselves, as features like deficient paradigms may be.

And what of the other outstanding features of the MnE modals? The most important one is the lack of nonfinite forms. In his article on the *do* auxiliary (which was presented in §6.3.2) Hirtle (1997) discusses the non-occurrence of *do* in nonfinite forms:

The incompatibility can be easily recognized in the case of the participles. The past participle is called "past", not because it situates its event in the past time-sphere of the indicative mood, but because it represents the time contained in the event, its event time, as "past", that is, as already accomplished, regardless of the moment in time — in universe time — where it may be situated. Obviously, the use of *done* as an auxiliary would involve a contradiction between the residual lexical meaning of DO auxiliary and the grammatical meaning of the past participle, i.e. between a stretch of duration ready for the accomplishment of the event and this same stretch of duration represented as already accomplished. Likewise for the present participle, which is called "present" because it represents the event in the course of its realization, as already accomplished in part and yet to be accomplished, regardless of where it may be referred to in universe time. Again there would be contradiction with the meaning of DO (1997: 126–7).

And the same can be said of the modals since "the modals resemble DO because, as we have seen, from the point of view of yet-to-be-filled time no portion of the event's duration can be represented as already actualized" (Hirtle 1997: 122–3). Both represent the conditions for actualization of an event. "The modals differ from DO with respect to the lesser degree of lexical dematerialization they have undergone: their ideogenesis results, not in the representation of a stretch of duration as such, but in the representation of a condition of potentiality in the course of its existence" (1997: 122).

As for the infinitive, Hirtle's argument is that "DO as an infinitive would add nothing to the view of the event provided by the main verb infinitive on its own and so DO is not itself found in this tense" (1997: 127). The same thing applies to the modals.

From this point of view, we can clearly see that this defectiveness of the modal auxiliaries (their incapacity to occur in non-finite forms) stems, not from some consequence of the *Korrel shift*, but from their very lexical nature, as conditioners. This would also explain why they were already so rarely found, in OE, in non-finite form.

This incapacity may nevertheless have borne upon the *un*change. From the point of view of Psychomechanics, the quasi-nominal mood is the first *chronothesis*, the first step in the conception of time in the verb. If such a step (and maybe also the second one leading to the subjunctive mood) were missing, combined with the preterit-present character of the modals, these verbs could disregard the current δ in favour of the old order.

The impossibility of taking objects is also the result of the nature of modals: they set conditions on something in time, they cannot be complemented, completed, by a word consignifying space, only by one consignifying time (cf. Chap I, §1.2.1) — a verb, either overt or implied. As for direct negation and interrogative inversion, since they only express the condition upon which depend the event, there is no incongruity between using them in the indicative and then negating or questioning their incidence to the subject. The relation is, *mutatis mutandis*, the same as between *do*, the infinitive and the subject.

The idea that these characteristics of modals stem from different aspects of their nature and significate is supported by the existence of semi-modal behaviour in *need* and *dare*. Depending on which characteristics the speaker gives to these verbs when uttered, they will retain this or that feature of the modals.

7.4.5 Double modals

This brings us to the infamous 'double modals'. These phrases, made up of two consecutive modals are found in certain dialects of English, principally in the southern

United States and Scotland. In the latter dialect, we find examples like[10]

(52)   He'*ll can* cum neist weik.

(53)   If wey *had cuid* cum.

whereas in the former, cases like following are more common:

(54)   You *might would* say that

(55)   I *might should* come over there

(56)   You *might ought* to tie that tree from the other side

Furthermore,

> A similar regionalism, *used to could*, has also been observed, ... It is my impression that *might can*, *might will*, and especially *might may* are also used, though not *might shall*. Labov, Cohen, Robins, and Lewis (1968: 260–63) also found *might don't* and *must didn't* amongst speakers of Black English (Butters 1973: 283, n2).

A number of questions must be answered in order to account for the existence of these particular constructions. First of all, we have to see if indeed two words are involved, or if it is a case of a single word compounded from what were two modals. The easiest way to verify this is to see if the two can be separated, for instance by an adverb or a negation. The examples below support the two-word analysis.

(57)   Yee'*ll noa caan* gaang dhe moarn (Wilson 1915: 125)

       "You won't be able to go tomorrow"

(58)   *Will he no can* mend them? (Brown & Millar 1980: 121)

The second important question raised by these constructions is whether the two words are really what they appear to be: modal auxiliaries. A thread of the answer

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[10]The first two come from Denison (1993: 294) and the following ones from Butters (1973: 276–7).

lies in an observation in Butters: "semantically, the constructions denote roughly what might be conveyed in formal Standard English with *perhaps*, or informally with *maybe*, e.g. *You perhaps should..., You maybe could ...* etc." (1973: 279). It would seem that the first of the two words is not a modal auxiliary, but some sort of **adverb**. This is understandable: both the semantics and the incidential regimen of modals are compatible with a reanalysis as adverbs. Adverbs, the reader will recall from Chapter I (§1.1.7), are made incident to another incidence, like the one from a verb to its support NP (its subject). Similarly, auxiliaries are the intermediaries between the non-finite event and the support NP; to give the modal an outside incidence to that of verb to NP is a rather small step.

As for the meaning of modals, by setting a condition they have more or less the same semantic role as sentence or epistemic adverbs: they qualify the whole proposition, especially as regards the relation from subject to verb. To wit, the adverb *maybe* which is made of, not one, but two auxiliaries, *may* and *be*.

This proposition is not new:

> Labov et al. (1968) suggested in passing that *might* could be an adverb, as have Miller and Brown (1980) for Scots, arguing that *might* is semantically and, at least in part, syntactically equivalent to *maybe*. Two formal syntactic studies [of] American double modals have proposed that the initial modal is an adverbial or adverbial-like unit (Whitley 1975, Battistella 1991) (Montgomery & Nagle 1993: 93).

The view of *might* as an adverb has however been challenged (cf. Battistella 1991), especially concerning certain facts of negation placement. For instance, in the following, *not* is found between *might* and *could*, which would not be possible if *might* was a simple adverb:

(59)   They *might not could* have gone over the state line to get her (Battistella 1993: 51)

(60) *They *perhaps not could* have gone ...

On the other hand, it could be argued that *might not* is here a single lexical unit, that the two have been fused to become /maitnot/ with the meaning of "maybe not". Notice also that in the example cited above, from Scots, we do not find *not* as the negation marker, but rather *no*.

Another way to verify this hypothesis would be to look at cases — if there are any — of double modals with a second-person-singular subject, and see if the first word is inflected. But much more research would have to be done on the subject and unfortunately, such a case study would go beyond the boundaries of this thesis.[11]

If this *might* (as well as *used to, ought to* and others) is indeed an adverb, it is syntactically limited to ante-modal use, although in sentences like
(61) You might think this is a modal.

it is arguably difficult to distinguish between adverb *might* and modal. Notice also that it is more often found with past tense modals, as its meaning (more or less 'maybe') is more compatible with such condition setting, but still quite possible with the present-tense ones.

It is then the contention of this author that so-called 'double modals' do not, *per se*, involve two modal auxiliaries, but rather an adverb (*might*, etc.) and a modal or a modal and a semi-modal (Scots *can*).

7.4.6 Cursor and Cely test

Before leaving you with the conclusion of this chapter, a word or two about the shortfalls of the *Cursor and Cely test*. Two factors contribute to the decision of not including it in this chapter. *Primo*, there has not been that much, in the data,

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[11]It does seem, however, that the Scots case involves more than the adverbialization of modals, that *can* is not perceived as a full-fledged auxiliary, as it is still inflected in non-finite forms.

concerning the dialect spread of the reanalysis. *Secundo,* not many characteristics could be looked for with regard to the *Korrel shift.*

What could we be looking for? Not the occurrence of non-finite forms, since they are not the result of the shift in δ. In fact, the hypothesis has been supported mainly, *mea culpa,* by reasoning and not by direct observation. And as such, no single piece of evidence could be hunted for in these texts. Nevertheless, a few observations concerning the language of the *Cursor Mundi* can be made.[12] The various dialects of the *Cursor* exhibit a use of the modals which has not as yet been standardized as in MnE:

(62) "We," þai said, "Quat rede *can* we, (*CursM.* 9065)

      "What advice do we have [know]?"

(63) Sco sa well her mister *cuth.* (*CursM.* 13142)

      "She knew her master so well"

It is interesting to note that there are certain instances where it is the Trinity MS that shows 'exceptional' behaviour.

(64) Now wate sir noe quat was to do// and hew þe timbre þat *sulde* þerto

      (Fairfax 1723-24) (Cotton: And hent timber þat fel þar-to)

      "Now Noah knew what to do, and hewed the timber that should [go] thereto"

This tells us that, at the time these texts were written, some of the characteristics attributed to present-day English modals were not yet implemented, but they neither supports nor invalidates the hypothesis proposed here.

Conclusion

We have seen here that the status of MnE modal auxiliaries is the result of a set of forces that made them up into a unique set of verbs, amongst these forces, the *Korrel*

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[12]The use of the modals in the *Cely Letters* is quite compatible with MnE usage.

shift. As with the auxiliary *do*, however, the *cause première* lies somewhere else than in the *shift*, although it is still by large a matter of (grammatical) semantics.

Conclusion

*Change. Change. Change. When you say words a lot
they don't mean anything. Or maybe they don't mean
anything anyway, and we just think they do.*

<div align="right">Delirium</div>

And so we come to the end of our journey. But we must now take a look back. In
the first chapter of this thesis, I presented various principles of the Psychomechanics
of language, and showed how they could be inscribed into a more syntax-oriented
theory, namely HPSG. And, it would seem, this was left at that: the discussions
in the following chapters were all of a Psychomechanical nature. But that does not
mean that they go against HPSG (or, more accurately, the mixed frame I have dubbed
IPSG). A short exposition of these reanalyses will suffice to support this claim.

To begin at the beginning, the *Korrel shift*. Basically, the shift represents a change
in a default specification within the verb, from $\delta(\omega)$ to $\delta(\alpha)$. This can be stated in
the base grammar as a default specification rule like:

$$\text{Verb} \rightarrow \delta(\alpha)$$

Chapters IV and V presented changes as implicit results of this shift, in a way matters
of lexicon-based syntactic choices which do not need specific representations.

Concerning the modals, it could be stated in their AVM that they are $\delta(\omega)$, hence
effectively overriding the default. As for the non-occurrence of non-finite forms for

do or the modals, a rule could be invoked saying that condition-stating verbs refuse the quasi-nominal mood.

In Chapter III, I gave a list of various changes having occurred within the English verb, briefly discussing each, and narrowing the scope of research to four of them, as more likely to have been influenced by the *Korrel shift*. But as it came out, one of them, the development of *do* insertion, failed this prediction. It was discovered that it had no direct link to the shift. It is then possible that some of the changes rejected in that chapter were in some way linked to the shift and, in future years, it will be interesting to pursue such a line of investigation. Also, as is often the case, each of the answers offered in this thesis has given rise to a number of questions, questions which may make for much work in the years to come.

This, it would seem, is the beginning of a new line of analysis of historical data of English. And although I may sometimes have been hard on previous studies, I must acknowledge that I have nevertheless built upon them in my reanalyses. This has not been a rejection of what was done before, but a step in the same direction, albeit with a new tool of analysis in hand. A tool which, combined with the other ones at our disposal, may grant historical linguistics a new momentum.

Appendix A

The origin of the English perfect

Introduction

Since it is so often referred to in the preceding pages, I reproduce it here, *verbatim*, the section on the origin of the present perfect form in English, found in Bélanger (1995b: 14ff.).

A.1   The traditional hypothesis

The traditional hypothesis concerning the origin of the present perfect form links it with constructions of the type 'he has the letter written'. Although some linguists would equate this type of phrase with the perfect (cf. Gallagher 1969, also discussed in McCoard 1978: Ch.6), it is generally agreed that these two constructions do not have the same meaning or structure in many respects. First of all, there is a real feeling of possession associated with the verb *have* in the 'have + N + -ed' construction. Visser says that *have* originally implied possession here and the past participle was a complement to the direct object (1973: §2001). The past participle is directly incident to the object which in most cases would fall into the accusative, "Only an accusative object is accompanied by an inflected participle..." (Mitchell 1985: §709). And so,

the subject possesses the object in the state denoted by the past participle (as having been written, in the example given). This leads us to other differences between the two: in order to have an object, the verb has to be transitive, "The use of *have* and *had* as an auxiliary for the perfect and pluperfect began in the OE period, but it was then chiefly found with transitive verbs..." (Jespersen 1982: §217). Furthermore, although in both cases there is a stative impression (cf. Visser 1973: §2001), the "have something written" construction evokes the state of the direct object, while the present perfect evokes a state of the subject — that of being in the aftermath of the event. This seems to come from the fact that in the former, the participle is related directly to the patient, whereas in the latter, it is goes through *have*, which, in turn, is related to the subject. Another difference lies in the participle itself which is felt to have 'adjectival force' in the 'has the letter written' structure ("*teste* its being (in the beginning) inflected in agreement with the gender and number of the object" (Visser 1973: §2001)) since the object is mentioned as being in a certain form, whereas in the present perfect the participle is verbal. "That [the participle] is verbal in MnE sentences like 'I have seen it again' is certain." (Mitchell 1985: §724)

As to the form itself, it is seen by some to be of Latin origin:

> Quand ce type roman s'est constitué, il y avait une grande force expressive: je possède quelque chose qui est dit. Le procédé, très frappant, se retrouve en germanique, après la période la plus ancienne de la langue (il n'y en a pas encore trace en gotique au VIᵉ siècle après Jésus-Christ), sans doute par imitation d'une manière de dire latine qui semblait frappante et commode; de ce qu'il y a ici une manière de grouper les mots, on ne conclura pas que le germanique a emprunté au latin une forme grammaticale: les formes grammaticales proprement dites ne semblent guère s'emprunter; et, au moment où l'imitation a pu avoir lieu, le type *habeo dictum* comportait sans doute encore deux mots sentis comme nettement distincts: ce n'était pas encore une forme grammaticale, mais un groupement de mots. Avec le temps, le type *j'ai dit* s'est unifié... (Meillet

1912: 142-3).

But most would agree with Mitchell that it is native to English:

> We have already seen that the periphrasis with *habban* was well established in
> the earliest OE prose and poetry and that even there the majority of participles
> were uninflected. It appears to be clearly of native origin (as Zadorozny (1974,
> p.387) tells us) and to owe nothing to the Latin *urbem captam habet* 'He has
> captured the city and is keeping it captured' (1985: §724). See also Curme
> (1931: 358-9).

Although not an equivalent of the modern perfect, the 'possessive construction' is
considered to be its ancestor through a number of morpho-syntactic, and semantic,
changes, to be discussed below.

The ancient form using *beon* as an auxiliary is on the other hand usually less
discussed as regards its origin, since in MnE it no longer constitutes a perfect (the
uses and disappearance of this form will also be discussed below). This construction
is the intransitive counterpart of the 'possessive' form; it is sometimes felt to be
passive, more often not. Visser, calls it the 'resultative' form because it is "...void of
any connotation of passivity, but merely refers to a state as the result of a preceding
action..." (1973: §1898). In an intransitive verb, the object, in a way, is the subject
and so the subject, instead of 'holding','possessing' the object, 'exists' in a given
state; for example in 'the tree is fallen' the tree exists as fallen. This form is in
OE "frequent, but by no means used exclusively, with intransitive verbs relating to
motion or change" (Visser 1973: §1898).

From these 'primitive' forms to the modern ones, a series of evolutionary steps is
posited, "the product of a continuous development from the beginning with various
perturbations and changes along the way..." (McCoard 1978: 246) summed up by
Brinton as follows (1988: 100):

1. loss of the case endings on the participles;

2. transposition of the object and the participle in transitive constructions;

3. bleaching of the possessive meaning of *have* and of the existential meaning of *be* to general relational meanings;

4. generalization of the construction to include a large semantic class of verbs in the participle; and

5. development of the meaning of the construction from that of possession to that of resultant state ('Zustand') to that of completed action ('Vollendung der Handlung') (according to Visser 1973: 2189,2042, 'the notion of (completed) *action* is foregrounded').

"This *have* has sunk down, or been raised, to being a mere grammatical instrument in these combinations" (Jespersen 1982: §217); "The use of *habban* in this weakened sense is an essential preliminary to the use of the periphrasis ...This stage had already been reached in OE, e.g. (from Hoffmann) *BlHom* 15.26 þin agen geleafa þe hæfþ gehæledne and *Beo* 939 Nu scealc hafað/ þurh Drihtnes miht dæd gefremede, ..." (Mitchell 1985: §726); but "not before the fundamental meaning of *have* + attributive past participle had been obscured or become vague" (Visser 1973: §2002).

A.2   Problems with the hypothesis

This may seem at first a fairly accurate description of what must have happened, but on closer inspection numerous problems are raised by this account. The first one concerns the original meaning of the to-be auxiliaries *habban* and *beon/wesan*: Brinton tells us that these verbs have always had two meanings ('hold' and 'have' for the former, 'exist' and 'be' for the latter), which implies that there has been no 'bleaching of meaning' (1988: 100). This question was examined by Benveniste in his article on the mutations of categories:

> ...*Habeo* in predicative construction displays two meanings, 'hold' and 'have.'
> This preliminary condition is of capital importance; it dominates the available
> pattern of choices. The difference between 'hold' and 'have' has by and large
> been misjudged in the many scholarly treatments of the perfectum. ...Hence
> the widespread confusion that surrounds the analysis of this construction (1968:
> 86).[1]

A second problem concerns the frequency of the 'possessive' construction, oc-
curences of which "are at best rare in OE" (Brinton 1988: 101). Mitchell adds,
concerning examples in which the object is actually in the possession of the subject:

> These were already a minority in OE. Indeed, according to Hoffmann (pp. 27-
> 8), there were only seven such examples in OE and in them the function of
> the periphrasis is 'Zustandsbezeichnung', denoting the state arising from the
> action. These examples are *CP* 45.12 ðonne hæbbe we begen fet gescode suiðe
> untællice [Then have we both feet quite immaculately beshoed], CP 61.2 Se
> læce ... hæfðon his agnum nebbe opene wunde unlacnode, [the doctor had an
> open wound unhealed on his own nose] (Mitchell 1985: §725).

How could a somewhat rare (at least in the written records) idiomatic expression yield
a systematic verb form? The problem of its rarity may perhaps be countered by saying
that the present perfect must have been more frequent in verbal communication, but
this cannot be proven either way. Regarding the inflection of the past participle the
evidence is not very revealing either, in fact, it is "normally invariable" according
to Quirk & Wrenn (1957: 75). Brinton (1988: 102) says it is only in ME that the
preposing of the object indicates stative meaning (cf. Visser 1973: § 2189). Mitchell
tells us that "even with an accusative object, the participle is more often without

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[1]We can see here and below a problem which plagues many sematic studies, namely the view
that words tend to be polysemic. If this view is accepted, it gives the linguist the opportunity to
forgo the search for a unified meaning, hence effectively reducing the comprehension of certain words
(such as *have*) by making them into hydræ.

an inflexional ending" (1985: §709) and afterwards (§727) warns us about equating inflected participles with adjectival use (and *vice versa*).[2] Furthermore, the problem of the relevance of inflexion is raised by the fact that in modern French the past participle is still inflected for gender and number in the *passé composé*, although in certain cases agreement is gradually losing ground in the spoken language. It seems all the more irrelevant in light of Hoffmann's observation that the adjectival use was very infrequent.

On the spread from accusative to non-accusative objects, and to intransitive verbs (hence from stative to actional meaning), "the evidence (...) is also not telling. ...These occur in the earliest prose and verse" (Mitchell 1985: 289,1d). Hence, "no clear chronology can be established" (Brinton 1988: 102). Benveniste tries to remedy this problem by proposing that one of the conditions for the syntagm to be aspect is that the verbs denote, at the beginning, "a 'sensory-intellective' process inherent to the subject"; from there, a generalization occurs to other types of processes (1968: 87). But according to Brinton (1988: 265, note 8), this does not fit the facts. Furthermore, "the last step in the postulated semantic development of the perfect, from resultant state to antecedent completed action, has never been taken in English" as opposed to Modern German or French (ibid.: 102).[3]

A.3 The psychological origin

All this brings us to another, more essential, problem, that of the psychological origin of the perfect construction. Grammatical forms are not a matter of spontaneous generation; they do not spring up for no reason. They can be the result of factors

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[2]He still considers inflection relevant to the discussion, however: "But we need, I think, have little hesitation in accepting the orthodox view that in the original form of the periphrasis the participle was inflected and adjectival." (1985: §724).

[3]This is, however, very much open to discussion and will be contested by the data to be presented below. I shall try to show that "this last step" had been taken by English, but that something has changed in the meanwhile, i.e. that the representation of the instant of duration has changed in English but not in Dutch.

internal to the language or come from other languages. The case of borrowings, where an existent form is displaced or more often eliminated by a foreign one, has to be dismissed on the ground that the perfect does not seem to have been borrowed from any other language (like Latin or French), since such a borrowing would have had to occur in almost every Germanic language, which is unlikely.

Were there, in OE (or in early ME, as some will have it), such changes or a functional gap? It is here that the idea of aspectual functions will apply; let us make a brief parallel with the history of the French verb system.

> In the Latin verbal paradigm a reorganization of the original perfectum is effected, a change which leads through a split to two different forms. The value inherent in the synthetic perfectum (*audivi*) is passed on to the periphrastic perfectum (*auditum habeo*), which restricts the value of *audivi* to that of an aorist. Furthermore, the very fact that the auxiliary *habeo* retains the inflectional status of a free verb helps to establish a complete periphrastic conjugation which reshapes the paradigm of the perfectum (Benveniste 1968: 88-9).

There was a simplification of the verb system with a transferal of aspectual functions from internal morphology to periphrasis. According to Guillaume, there was repetition, in the Latin architecture of the verb, between the two aspects (*perfectum* and *imperfectum*):

> Cette cause réside en ce que le système latin n'est pas un, mais double. Il y a un système *amabam–amo–amabo, amarem,* **amare**, *amem* et un système: *amaveram–amavi–amavero, amavissem,* **amavisse**, *amaverim.* Soit, du point de vue formel, la répétition d'une même conception systématique, - répétition maintenue par l'écart *amo-amavi,* ...et que la réduction de cet axe ferait, par conséquent, disparaître. Il est concevable que dans ces conditions le problème de l'unification du système se soit posé... (1984b: 88-9).

The simplification of the verb system (accompanied by corresponding phonological

changes) led to the disappearance of the *perfectum-imperfectum* dichotomy, a view which is also adopted by Meillet (1917: 142). This simplification resulted in the creation of a new type of aspectual system no longer based on the opposition between complete and incomplete, but rather on that between transcendent and immanent. Thus the *passé composé* was created in French - a homologue of the English perfect. One must understand that what Guillaume and Valin (among others) are saying is not that the *passé composé* sprang up just when the *perfectum-imperfectum* system collapsed, but that it had been evolving from the point when the old system was beginning to weaken.

If we concur with this explanation, we must ask ourselves how it can be related to the case at hand, that of the English verb system. The first question to be answered, before any other treatment of this problem can be undertaken, is whether there was a grammatical aspect system in OE (or Germanic), and if so what it was.

A.3.1   Preverbs

Most of the work done on aspect in Germanic deals with the verbal prefixes (also called preverbs). This is far from surprising since the notion of aspect was originally drawn, as Lyons tells us (1968: 313), from Slavic languages where it consists of a system of prefixes attached to the verbs and expressing a series of lexical differences.

Many are the grammarians who consider the preverbs to be aspectuals; "The perfective aspect (...) is in OE often indicated by means of verbal prefixes ('preverbs') such as *a-*, *for-* and *ge-*." (Mustanoja 1960: 446) Most often *ge-* is seen as having mainly aspectual meaning (Mossé 1938). This hypothesis, however, has been widely contested:

> Prefixes such as '*a-*, *be-*, *for-*, *ge-*, *of-*, *to-*' (cf Quirk & Wrenn §129) are often described as means of expressing perfective aspect. Even if we substitute 'completion of an action' for 'perfective aspect' (see §868), it is clear that this is not

the sole function of any of these prefixes. It is the function of the lexicographer to deal fully with them, but brief mention may be made of *be-* and *ge-*. The *locus classicus* for the ambiguity of *be-* is, of course, the now infamous crux *ealuscerwen* in *Beo* 769. The prefix *ge-* is equally ambiguous, as Lindemann decisively shows (p.17-8) (Mitchell 1985: §870).

Scherer (1958) demonstrates, through a comparative analysis of the Latin and OE versions of the Gospels, that *ge-* does not convey any systematic aspectual distinction. He argues therefore that preverbs should rather be regarded as lexical markers. To which Lindemann adds "that the action of the verb to which it is affixed is directed forward toward something or outward" (1970: 63). It is thus lexical, not syntactical, in function.

Another problem which can be raised by taking preverbs as markers of grammatical aspect, and their gradual disappearance as creating the need for the perfect, is that equivalents of the perfect have evolved in other Germanic languages (like German or Dutch) where the preverbs are maintained:

> I need hardly observe that in other Germanic dialects the prefix played pretty much the same part as in English, but nowhere was it so totally effaced, if we except the Norse languages, as in modern English. To this day, *ge-* maintains itself in Dutch and High German, and, in not a few instances, continues to show traces of its old function (van Draat 1903: §14).

We are thus forced to conclude, in accordance with Mitchell (1985: §870), that the preverbs did not mark aspect (at least not as systematic grammatical significates) but rather some sort of **Aktionsart**, *i.e.* "an indication of the intrinsic temporal qualities of a situation" (Brinton 1988: 3).[4] Consequently, the appearance of the perfect in English (and other languages) is not a result - or a cause, for that matter - of the the disappearance or weakening of the verbal prefixes. In fact it has been

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[4]This, according to Comrie, is a "semantic aspect" (1976:41-51).

proposed (by Brinton and many others) that their 'replacement' in Modern English was not the perfect or, as Mossé (1938) suggests, the progressive, but the so-called phrasal verbs: "The difference between the imperfective and perfective aspects (sic) is strikingly illustrated by verb-pairs like *sit* (imperfective) *sit down* (perfective) and *stand - stand up*" (Mustanoja 1960: 445).

So the question remains: did Germanic possess an aspectual system? If we view the problem from the point of view of Proto-Indo-European, it is a well-established fact that the PIE language developed its aspectual system before instituting any tense markers. As the Germanic tongue evolved it took the PIE aspects and made them into tense forms, especially those which gave rise to strong verbs: "The massive ablaut evidence of the strong verbs of Germanic, however, not only shows the validity of the line of descent, but also gives valuable evidence of how the three aspect system of late PIE becomes the two tense system of Germanic" (Hewson 1995: 155).

The aspectual system of IE was thus transferred into a binary (past/non-past) tense system. The Germanic system, although an heir to IE aspect, does not represent aspect, because that dichotomy was displaced to create the tense system. If Hewson is right, not much happened afterward:

> From the very earliest texts the Germanic system is very simple, consisting of three nominal forms, two subjunctives, and two indicative tenses. Since that time the only major change has been the development of a periphrastic future, a periphrastic perfect, and in English a periphrastic imperfective, the so-called Progressive. (1995: 165).

These facts would lead us to conclude that Germanic did not have an aspectual system which could have been replaced by the simple-perfect opposition. This still leaves us with an unanswered question however: what need was there for this opposition? Since it developed when it did, the need must have manifested itself at that moment and not much before. Grammatical forms arise out of specific needs and are

not created for no reason; furthermore, language is supposed to be very well adapted to provide very rapidly for the needs of its speakers.

Guillaume adds more in the way of an explanation, implicating the creation, in French, of a three-way non-finite (more precisely, *quasi-nominal*) mood through the reduction of the aspectual axis of Latin and an "amplification de la perspective virtuelle ...(qui a) pourvu le français d'infinitifs généraux ...Les infinitifs latins n'étaient que des infinitifs partiels." (1984b: 89). This gave French its past participle, on which Guillaume comments:

> cette détension étant exprimée par le participe passé, qui est beaucoup plus un adjectif qu'un verbe,[5] Ainsi cette limite *tn* est verbe par position, mais n'est plus verbe par sa composition. Il y a là une antinomie que la langue résout en reprenant en tension par le moyen d'un verbe *ad hoc*, dit auxiliaire, la détension exprimée par le participe (1984b: 18).

The perfect forms would thus come from a verbal form in need of verbal function, i.e., the past participle would have to be able to be used as a verb.

The *ad hoc* verb involved is created though a dematerialisation of *avoir* or *être* (1971: 144-5), which is not to say a delexicalisation: there is a major part of the meaning remaining, in the form which the auxiliary gives to event time. For Guillaume, "L'expression de l'aspect à partir du participe passé, forme adynamique du verbe, est l'aboutissement d'un lent progrès dans le sens de l'objectivité" (1964: 58). He adds, in a footnote, a very interesting comment: "Cette objectivité, abstraite de la notion pure, du concept, ...a été, dans la catégorie du nom, la cause profonde de l'article" referring us to his monograph on the article (Guillaume 1919). We will return to this comment in a moment (sect. A.4).

Guillaume also comments on the disappearance of preverbs as aspectual markers:

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[5]In Guillaume 1964: 57: "forme dans laquelle il convient de voir le verbe qui a consommé tout le devenir qu'il contenait sous la forme infinitive."

La tendence du préverbe à outrepasser ses effets grammaticaux a eu cette conséquence, dans les langues où elle n'a pu être contenue, de rejeter progressivement le préverbe en dehors du système de l'aspect, qui s'en est trouvé ébranlé et qu'il a fallu, à un moment donné, reconstruire avec de nouveaux éléments (1964: 55).

It is now time, I believe, to sum up what we know: the perfect - like the French *passé composé* - evolved independently from the homologous forms (auxiliary 'have' or 'be' + non-passive past participle) be they Germanic or Romance. Everyone agrees that it appeared without any obvious direct influence on the part of the other Germanic languages (OE being an insulary language). On the other hand, the construction is common to practically every Germanic and Romance language, as well as to some from other IE families. To the best of my knowledge, no analyst has yet proposed any explanation for this wide-spread phenomenon.

The evidence reviewed has, so far, led us to a dead end: the perfect cannot be a result of the failing of the Aktionsart system of Germanic (as Dutch and German still possess such a system), nor is it a result of Latin influences (this would be hard to apply to Swedish). This form seems to be native to every language where it is found.

A.4 Auxiliaries

Let us consider the existential requirements of the perfect: there has to be both a past participle and an auxiliary – as well, of course, as the possibility of using them in conjunction. If we come back to Guillaume's hypothesis, leaving out the participle, we are left with the need, obvious as it is, for the existence of an auxiliary verb. *Have* auxiliary does not seem to have existed in Gothic (Mossé 1952) and *wesan* was not used (in periphrasis) for the perfect, but only for passive constructions. We do not know about many of the intricacies of the periphrastic passive, and so are left to

wonder whether this *be* had the status of auxiliary or was merely copular, as in 'I am blue.' Still the fact remains that *habban* had not yet been conceived as an auxiliary.

So then, what is an auxiliary? Guillaume, I have mentioned above, tells us that it is a 'general' verb, i.e. one which has been *subducted*, representing a form of grammatical time, but with less substance than its 'full' counterpart and so calls for a complement of matter (Guillaume 1964: 78). It is, in a way, the verbal counterpart of the article. Valin presents the article thus:

> [sa] fonction, purement grammaticale, est de spécifier la modalité formelle selon laquelle s'accomplira l'incidence interne prévue en langue, par catégorisation grammaticale, pour le substantif. Ce qui ne va pas sans conférer à l'article, sous un certain rapport, un caractère tautologique, caractère qui se retrouve, mutatis mutandis, dans les auxiliaires verbaux. ...Où il apparaît que *mutatis mutandis*, (...) le rapport de l'auxiliaire à l'auxilié est non seulement une homologie, mais une stricte isonomie du rapport qui lie l'article au substantif: article et auxiliaire se présentent, en effet, l'un et l'autre en position de *forme* et de *support* — purement spatial dans le cas de l'article, spatio-temporel dans le cas de l'auxiliaire — par rapport à une *matière* déjà pourvue d'une forme grammaticalement caractérisée et en position d'*apport*... (1981: 42, 82).

Guillaume has often talked of the advent of the article as being the result of a historical movement towards the more general, the universal, on the part of the noun, a movement which led to phonological changes and to the gradual decline of noun declensions:

> L'article apparaît ainsi non pas avoir pour cause la réduction de la déclinaison, mais procéder de la même cause profonde que celle-ci: la pénétration croissante, quoique inachevable, de l'universalisation d'entendement sous la particularisation de discernement, c'est-à-dire, en résultat, sous le sémantème (1964: 106).

In the IE languages, the article only appears (not in full, only half of the system at first) when the number of cases drops below five:[6]

> This practical need is for a morpheme to counteract the drift, within the system
> of the noun, towards a greater generalization. This drift is historically attested,
> in the Indo-European languages, in the disappearance of cases. ...The historical
> facts, indeed, show a correlation between the appearance of article systems and
> the reduction of the eight-case system of Indo-European (Hewson 1972: 14).

. Can we say the same thing about the auxiliary: is it a result of a generalizing movement in the verb system? If so, is the movement restricted to the verb system or is it congruent to that of the noun? To answer these questions we have to look at historical as well as cross-linguistic evidence. In the case of Germanic and Romance languages, it seems fairly clear from the historical records that the article and auxiliary appeared within a relatively short interval. An interesting case, from this point of view, is that of Bulgarian. This language is perhaps the only Slavic tongue to have developed an article (a definite one, placed at the end of the word, '-a, -ta/o/e') — and the only one to have less than five cases. Its verb system also exhibits some particularities not found in its sister languages; one of these is the existence of a perfect as well as some sort of narrative periphrasis:.

> While the declension system in Bulgarian has become greatly simplified... the
> conjugational system has been greatly elaborated and enriched... In Bulgarian
> a system of tenses has been developed for relating about facts not witnessed
> by the speaker... called преизказване (Renarration or Indirect Mood). The
> sign for this ...is the use of one of a series of special compound tenses with the
> auxiliary verb *e* or *ca* always omitted when the third person singular or plural
> is used (de Bray 1980: 113-4).

There is then evidence to support the view that article and auxiliary are congruent and that the creation of auxiliaries leads to the advent of a perfect. On the other

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[6]The *vocative* is not considered to be a case of tongue but rather one of *discourse*.

hand, this brings us, seemingly, in conflict with Brinton's first argument: the absence of any 'bleaching of meaning' in the verb. As we have already said, the auxiliary use of a verb is not the 'empty' side of the 'full' use; the sense of 'holding', 'possessing' is still present in *have* auxiliary in the existential condition it presents to the event expressed by the past participle. This condition or form of the supporting event places the subject in the afterphase of the participle's event, in the holding of the results of the latter: "The job of the auxiliary is to provide a place subsequent in time from which to view the past participle's event and so, for the personal moods, to situate the subject in the result phase" (Hirtle 1975: 29).

This possession is however much more abstract, the verb being more general (or universal): in a phrase like 'I have eaten,' what is possessed is not made explicit and so the verb *have* finds itself missing something – as Guillaume explained. The auxiliary is partly dematerialized (or rather *un*materialized), grammaticalized, in a quest for a substance which it finds in the participle which is looking for a means to become verbal again. The verb becomes the means for expressing the existential conditions of the participial form or infinitive, in the case of the modals, which it supports. So we can say that Jespersen was partially right in his evaluation of the status of the verb *have*.

But can we say that the existence of the auxiliary use (and of a participle) is the sole condition for the creation of the perfect form and its cousins? No, there has to be an expressive need to fill. For example, in the Germanic languages there was a need for a marked (modal) future (the present being used to express it normally), and consequently a periphrasis made up of auxiliary (*werden, will*, etc.) + infinitive appeared - the infinitive being the most virtual form of the quasi-nominal mood. In English, a need was felt for a form capable of expressing an event in progress, which the simple form was unable to fill (contrarily to German or Dutch). A periphrasis was then 'instituted', formed of the auxiliary 'be', which placed the subject in the middle of the event expressed by the present participle, the form *in fieri* of the quasi-nominal

mood.

The expression of a past event seen as perfective having effect on the present has always been felt in IE: it was answered either by a morphological (grammatical) system like the Latin *perfectum/imperfectum* opposition (aspect) or by a lexical system, like the Germanic or Slavic preverbs, or MnE phrasal verbs (Brinton 1988), which express Aktionsart. But such a lexical process would have its shortcomings and when a grammatical way of marking these ideas makes its appearance, it is readily accepted. When the auxiliary use of 'have' (and 'be') made its appearance, it allowed the creation of a new regular system of aspect for the representation of event time, one which took the opposition from imperfective/perfective to immanent/transcendent, without recourse (as was the case of Latin) to a parallel morphology or a non-general lexical system.

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