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## Aspect, Tense and The Missing Link

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Aspect is defined as "different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation" in what is perhaps the best known work on the subject, Comrie's 1976 study (p.3). Of prime importance in this definition is the fact that Comrie distinguishes clearly between the situation we have in mind to talk about, which is necessarily outside language, and the linguistic means for viewing or conceiving it. Like many other linguists, I shall talk about the speaker representing the situation or experience he has in mind, which is a way of viewing or conceiving it, because language really does let us re-present our experience, present it in a different way. The importance of this term is that it constantly reminds us of the fact that the linguistic representation, or meaning, is distinct from the experience or situation presented by our senses, our memory, our imagination, etc. I am taking the trouble to make explicit this distinction — between what in our mental awareness belongs to language and what is outside language — because it is so general that it remains implicit in most studies and yet is fundamental for any lucid discussion of linguistic meaning, as I have pointed out elsewhere<sup>1</sup>. This is particularly true here if we are to focus clearly on the grammatical problem, because the experience we want to talk about — say a sunset or being hungry — may be based on perceptions common to all humans but the linguistic means put at our disposal by our tongue for representing it will vary from one linguistic community to another. That is to say, we can expect the system of aspect and hence the representation of the situation, to differ more or less appreciably from one language to another, in every language that has a verb system, of course.

A second important point in Comrie's definition is that it restricts aspect to representing temporal elements, and so by implication excludes

1. Cf. "Meaning and referent: for a linguistic approach" in *Word* 45 (2), 1994, 103-117.

anything in the situation which does not involve time. This is made clear in a note, where he explains that this definition:

*is based on the definition given by Holt (1943: 6): 'les manières diverses de concevoir l'écoulement du procès même', i.e. 'different ways of conceiving the flow of the process itself'. This definition has been generalised somewhat so that it does not refer solely to processes, but also, for instance, to states.*

In generalizing his definition to include any item in the situation represented as made up of a stretch of time, any process or state, Comrie clearly excludes items which are not represented this way (objects, for example) and thereby continues in the classical tradition, where the verb is conceived of as a word "with time", *cum tempore*.

A third important point in the definition is that aspect is restricted to representing the internal time of any happening, the time contained in any process or state. By this we can understand the time contained between the beginning and the end of a happening, what is called in ordinary speech its **duration**. This is important because when Comrie comes to talk about tense it permits him to distinguish the time contained in a process or state, "situation-internal time", from the time outside it and containing it, "situation-external time" (1976: 5), a distinction we shall return to below. Even more important, however, is the generality of this definition. Since we cannot perceive or even conceive of a process or state without duration — a happening with no time between its beginning and end simply would not exist — the representation of any happening must include a representation of its duration. That is to say, if the definition is valid every verb must include a representation arising from the system of aspect because every verb represents a process or state. Aspect, then, is the grammatical means of representing what is common to every happening, its duration.

This manner of conceiving aspect seems quite clear because it recognizes the abstract role of a grammatical system, that of representing duration as distinct from, as abstracted from, the particular process or state itself, even though in our experience of the situation duration can never be perceived separate from some happening. Comrie's study provides an informative discussion of his view of aspect in a wide variety of languages but when he applies his definition to English, his mother tongue, certain difficulties arise, particularly with regard to the *have* + past participle form:

*Traditionally, in works that make a distinction between tense and aspect, the perfect has usually, but not always, been considered an aspect, although it is doubtful whether the definition of aspect given above can be interpreted to include the perfect as an aspect. (1976: 6)*

Although he discusses the *have* + past participle form in his study (p. 52-61) because it "seems most convenient to do so", he never really resolves this doubt. He does call it the "perfect aspect" but says that this

form "is an aspect in a rather different sense from the other aspects treated so far" and discusses this difference, not in terms of the internal temporal constituency, the duration, of the happening, but in terms of "a relation between two time-points". Thus he leaves undecided the question of whether or not the have + past participle form in English is an aspect, a situation which invites further reflexion on how the conception of aspect described above applies to this verb form. The present article will attempt to throw light on this question not by examining a number of other languages but by situating the system of aspect within the more general system of the verb in English.

It will make the discussion clearer if we have a more convenient way of referring to the representation provided by the system of aspect. So far we have been talking in terms of processes and states (happenings), and duration, all of which arise in the extra-linguistic, experiential situation. To maintain the fundamental distinction between the extra-linguistic and the linguistic we need appropriate terms to designate the latter. We shall call the linguistic representation of a happening (process or state) an **event**, a term which Comrie uses in a different sense (cf. p.51). We can then use the expression **event time** to designate the grammatical representation of duration provided by means of the system of aspect.

The first point in our discussion will be to explore the difference between aspect and tense. As the basis of the difference, we can adopt Comrie's view that "although both aspect and tense are concerned with time, they are concerned with time in very different ways" (1976: 5), provided it is understood that both aspect and tense are grammatical systems for representing time, each in its own way. Comrie adopts substantially the same definition as other grammarians when he points out that tense "locates situations in time" (ibid.), and when he defines it as the "grammaticalised expression of location in time" in his later study of tense (1985: 9). In view of the fundamental distinction emphasized above, we can only assume this to mean locating events, not situations, in time, because, after all, our system of tense cannot locate in time the extra-linguistic situation, the sunset or the feeling of hunger, but only our linguistic representation of that situation. Granted this interpretation and the change in terms it entails, viewing tense in this way — as the linguistic system for locating events in time — provides a good basis for a comparison with aspect because "aspect is not concerned with relating the time of the situation [= event time] to any other time-point" (1976: 5). The contrast depicted by Comrie between the two is quite clear: tense locates an event by relating it to some point in time whereas aspect does not. On the other hand things are anything but clear when Comrie considers the perfect. Although, as we have seen, the perfect "expresses a relation between two time-points" it is "not just a tense" (1976: 6) and

so he is led to consider it an aspect, albeit "in a rather different sense". The need for further clarification here is manifest.

I shall argue that this lack of clarity arises from the failure to bring in a third system of the verb concerned with representing time, a system which provides a necessary link between aspect and tense. We can approach the point I want to make through Comrie's expression "the time of the situation", which, I would maintain, is ambiguous and so can lead to confusion. It could be interpreted either as the time contained in the situation, its duration, or as time containing the situation, say the past or the future. That is to say, we could understand the expression to mean, in Comrie's words, either "situation-internal time" or "situation-external time". This ambiguity tells us something significant about what we should expect to find on the level of linguistic meaning: the distinction between contained time and containing time entails the representation of time in two different ways. We have seen that it is aspect that represents time as contained, as event time, and that it is tense that locates this representation in containing time, but we have not yet seen which system provides a representation of containing time. That is to say, unless the analysis of the system of the verb is pushed a little further, one necessary prior condition for locating an event in time is still lacking: the representation of time as a container, as an endless stretch for locating events.

Again we must pause to find appropriate terminology because here too we shall need a term to refer to this as a linguistic representation. On the analogy of the universe, ordinarily conceived of as unlimited space for containing everything spatial, I shall use the expression **universe time**<sup>2</sup> to designate time represented as an extent for containing all possible events. Universe time, then, is to be contrasted with event time as the representation of time capable of containing all events versus the representation of time contained in any event.

The notion I am designating by the expression "universe time" is not of course totally new. Most studies implicitly assume that, besides locating an event in time, tense represents time as a container, though such studies do not provide any description of just how containing time is represented. Comrie, on the other hand, explicitly attributes "situation-external time" to tense, as we have seen. In his study on tense he describes this as "a straight line, with the past represented conventionally to the left and the future to the right" (1985: 2), a line divided by the present moment. He depicts it as in Figure 1.

Figure 1

2. This term, like the corresponding term "event time" were first introduced by Roch Valin.



Not only does Comrie attribute this representation of containing time to tense but he considers it to be inherent in tense in any language: "More importantly, it will be claimed that this diagrammatic representation of time is adequate for an account of tense in human language." One can easily understand the basis for this sweeping generalization: any event situated on this time line will necessarily be referred to the present moment, whether preceding it, coinciding with it or succeeding it. In fact, this representation of universe time corresponds to what Comrie calls "absolute tense" which "should be interpreted to mean a tense which includes as part of its meaning the present moment as deictic centre" (1985: 36). On the other hand, Comrie himself brings in a type of tense which he opposes to absolute tense: "relative tense" which "refers to a tense which does not include as part of its meaning the present moment as deictic centre" (ibid.). That is to say, he introduces a type of tense for which the above representation of containing time is manifestly inadequate. If Comrie is right in claiming that some tenses are relative, and I shall give an example of this in a moment, then he cannot also claim that a representation of time divided by the present between past and future can account for all manifestations of tense. This inconsistency clearly arises because of an inadequate view of how containing or universe time is represented, a subject I wish to focus on now.

Unlike Comrie, I shall claim that it is not tense that provides this second representation of time in the verb, but rather that there is another grammatical system which comes into play here to provide the link between aspect and tense, a view which was first propounded by Gustave Guillaume in 1929 and has been developed by Roch Valin (1994: 9-17, 69-82) and others. To establish my claim, I want to start with the distinction between absolute tense and relative tense, a distinction which establishes two types of tense, as tense was defined above, since referring an event to the present moment and not referring it to the present moment constitute two very different ways of locating an event in time. English provides us with an excellent illustration of the two types. Thus if we say, for example, *I start tomorrow* or *I start now* or *I started yesterday*, the event starting is located in time with reference to the present moment. And this is why we cannot say *\*I start yesterday*: because of its absolute tense, start cannot locate its event at a point in time before the present. On the other hand, we can say *They suggested I start yesterday*, just as we can say *They suggested I start tomorrow*. In the last two examples the verb can be used with either *yesterday* or *tomorrow* and so we are forced to conclude that it does not locate its event in time in reference to the present moment. In short, the tense of *start* in these last two examples is relative.

The important point about these differences of usage is that they lead us back to the conditions governing usage, namely the different

meanings of the verb forms, as Comrie points out. Now this difference of meaning cannot be attributed to the lexeme since in both uses the verb expresses the notion of initiating or beginning something. The difference must reside in the grammatical representation: *start* as an absolute tense has a different grammatical meaning from *start* as a relative tense. That is to say, notwithstanding the identity of the physical sign, we are here confronted with two distinct grammatical forms, and we must try to identify them. This difference cannot be attributed to the aspect since there is no difference in the representation of event time: in both cases it is represented as perfective<sup>3</sup>. Rather, the difference of meaning is due to the fact that in one case the present is represented and in the other case it is not represented, as Comrie observes, and this concerns, not the time contained in the event, but the time containing the event, not event time but universe time. In other words, in order to have the present moment as a point of reference, as a deictic centre, it is necessary to have a representation of universe time in which the present moment is represented, something like Comrie's diagram above; in this case, any event located in universe time will necessarily be referred to the present. On the other hand, in order not to have the present moment as a point of reference, it is necessary to have a representation of universe time in which the present moment is not represented, something like what is depicted in Figure 2.

Figure 2

In this case, any event located in universe time will necessarily lack reference to the present. That is to say, the grammatical difference between *start* as an absolute tense and *start* as a relative tense is the consequence of two different ways of representing universe time in the system of the English verb. This brings us to the next step in our analysis: to discern which subsystem it is in the system of the verb that provides a representation of universe time.

In the examples given above, there is no means of distinguishing the two forms of the verb on the basis of the physical sign. This difficulty, which is of value here because it is a clear indication that tense is to be defined in terms of the meaning, not in terms of the sign, can be overcome if we resort to the widespread practice of commutation. Thus if we substitute different subjects into the examples, we find one type of subject, a third person singular, where a difference of sign does appear. As opposed to *He starts now* or *He starts tomorrow* we would say *They*

3. For the representation of event time as perfective in *I start tomorrow*, see Hirtle and Curat, 1986. For the perfectivity of the simple form in the other examples, see Hirtle 1988.

*suggested that he start tomorrow* or *They suggested that he start yesterday*. That is, where the absolute tense requires the -s inflexion with a third person singular subject, the relative tense takes no inflexion. This difference in the visible semiology of the English verb is, as any good grammar tells us, an indication of a difference in mood: the -s inflexion arises only in the indicative, whereas the  $\emptyset$  inflexion with third person singular subjects is found in the subjunctive. That is to say, we are here confronted with a difference in the mood of the verb. To confirm this observation, we might examine examples with the verb *to be*, this being the only verb in English which still shows a different sign in all persons for the two moods: *I am in Montreal now*, and *I am in Montreal tomorrow*, but not *\*I am in Montreal yesterday*, as opposed to *They suggested I be in Montreal tomorrow / now*, as well as *They suggested I be in Montreal yesterday*. All this leads us to the conclusion that the indicative mood involves what Comrie calls absolute tense whereas the subjunctive mood gives rise to relative tense.

The important point for us is that we have clear evidence of the subsystem we are looking for: it is the system of mood in the verb which provides a representation of universe time. Considering mood as a means of representing time in this way may appear surprising at first because most grammars of English treat mood in a very different fashion, as reflecting the attitude of the speaker with regard to the event. Thus they usually characterize the indicative as the mood of reality and the subjunctive as the mood of the virtual, of the possible, of "irrealis". Such views reflect the expressive effect of the sentence or the clause in which the verb appears but do not distinguish what the mood of the verb contributes to this overall effect. It was Guillaume who discovered the contribution of mood to the process of producing a grammatical representation of time, a process he called **chronogenesis**. He pointed out that in order for a verb to express its event in terms of reality, the event must be referred to the present moment, the only moment of real existence in our experience of time. Similarly, an event which is not referred to the present moment can only be seen as possible, virtual, unreal, etc. From this he concluded that there must be two different ways of representing universe time — with a representation of the present or without a representation of the present — and it is this which permits the indicative to express an event in terms of its real accomplishment and the subjunctive in terms of its possible accomplishment.

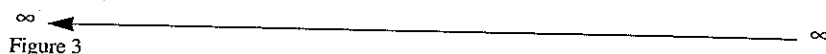
Guillaume was able to carry his analysis one step further when he realized that representing a link with the present, the place where the speaker sees himself existing in time, is not sufficient for an event to be seen as real: another necessary condition is a link with the place where the speaker sees himself existing in space because any happening is a



spatio-temporal entity. That is to say, any event seen as real must also be related to its subject, a grammatical support represented in space, because in no situation can we ever experience a happening without a spatial support of some sort. And the subject, through the system of ordinal (first, second, third) person, is referred to the place where the speaker sees himself existing in space. Recognizing this second necessary condition for an event to be seen as real permitted Guillaume to understand why non-finite verbs, which are not thus referred to the speaker's place in space through a subject (not even implicitly, as in the case of the imperative) or to his place in time through a representation of the present, could not even express an event in terms of its possible accomplishment as in the subjunctive, but only in terms of its conceivability. This is the case of the infinitive and the participles: these verb forms are, like the subjunctive, relative tenses insofar as time is concerned because they all express events in time with no reference to the present; but are also relative tenses insofar as space is concerned because they express events with no reference to a particular subject. As a consequence, non-finite verbs present their event merely as an idea, as something conceivable whose relation to a particular time or place is not actualized, though it must be represented as a potential because otherwise the lexeme could not be represented as an event. (Because of this, non-finite verbs, unlike verbs in the subjunctive and the indicative, can be readily used in adjectival or substantival functions as well as in their properly verbal functions.) To provide for this potential reference to a determined place in space, these non-finite or **quasi-nominal** forms, as Guillaume called them (because of their nominal functions), involve a representation of person as undetermined, as non-specified, with no specification of whether it is first, second or third person. To give them the potential for referring to a determined place in time, the quasi-nominal forms are provided with a distinct way of representing universe time: it must, of course, be conceived of as capable of containing any event but without any instant dividing it into different spheres or even any point where a subject can be situated. Because they involve a distinct way of representing universe time, the quasi-nominal forms belong to a separate mood.

In English, universe time represented under these conditions turns out to be merely a reflection of the common impression that time brings things to us and carries them away. That is to say, with no determined subject to realize them, the realization of events is seen as due only to the incessant movement of time. This gives rise to a representation of universe time which is little more than a generalization of our experience of happenings, which are seen first as yet to take place, then as taking place and finally as already having taken place, as over and done with. In spatial terms, and all representations of time involve a spatialization,

this results in viewing universe time as an undivided line oriented away from the future toward the past, and without limits (indicated here by the sign  $\infty$ ) as in Figure 3.



Here the arrow is intended to suggest that the movement of time, its "inherent mobility" as Guillaume puts it, is a falling away toward the past because any particular stretch of time is seen as something yet to be realized before it is seen as something already realized. That is to say, because the event is represented in the quasi-nominal mood without the conditioning influence of a subject, its accomplishment is represented as dependent on the movement of time bringing it out of the future toward the past.

Granted this representation of universe time, the way the three tenses of the quasi-nominal mood locate an event in time can be made clear. With regard to any point in time whether explicitly specified in the sentence or not, an event must be seen as either approaching it, going by it or already beyond it, viewpoints expressed respectively by the infinitive, the *-ing* participle and the *-ed* participle, as in Figure 4.

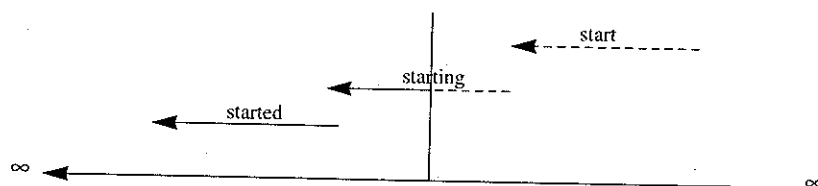


Figure 4

The grammatical make-up of the infinitive and its various uses with and without the preposition *to* have been examined in considerable detail in Duffley 1992, where it is shown that the infinitive's event may be represented as either moving towards or arriving at the point of actualization, depending on what the speaker wishes to express. Similarly for the *-ed* participle used with the auxiliary *have*: its event is always represented beyond the point of actualization, sometimes just beyond it, sometimes an appreciable distance beyond it (cf. Hirtle 1975). And an event represented by the *-ing* participle with auxiliary *be* (the progressive form), always straddles the point of actualization, even when it expresses a future event (cf. Hirtle and Curat 1986, Hirtle and Bégin 1991, etc.). That is to say, these three quasi-nominal forms are relative tenses, situating their event in relation to a point in time and to a point in space usually represented by another word, the auxiliary.

Having described the representation of universe time in the quasi-nominal mood in English, particularly by specifying the direction of its

movement, we can now contrast it with the representation of universe time underlying the subjunctive and indicative moods in English. Providing a subject for the verb, that is, providing a representation of ordinal person in time as a spatial support of which the verb is predicated, introduces a new factor into the construction of a time image: as a spatial support, the subject constitutes a condition governing the realization of the event. That is to say, the event can no longer be envisaged simply in terms of how it relates to some external point in time — whether it arises before or after or coincides with it. It must also be represented in terms of how it relates to its subject which conditions its realization, that is, in terms of its spatial support undertaking it or undergoing it. Represented from the point of view of the subject, the realization of any event can obviously have only one orientation, from beginning to end, and in English this leads to a reversal in representing universe time to make it a stretch of containing time open to the subject's conditioning influence. In the finite moods (subjunctive and indicative), therefore, universe time is represented as oriented toward the future.

In this respect, then, the two finite moods are alike: to provide a container for an event viewed as a stretch of time for the subject to move through from beginning to end, universe time is represented as unfolding in the direction of the future. As we have seen, however, in another important respect these two finite moods differ. The subjunctive, which can give no representation of the present, provides only an undivided, unlimited stretch of time for locating the event. The only point of reference for the event represented within the verb is its subject, so it requires some other means (e.g. the main verb in the indicative) to indicate its position in time. All the subjunctive can do is situate its event in time at a point where the subject can undertake its realization. This way of locating an event in time was illustrated in *They suggested that he start*, and can be diagrammed as in Figure 5.

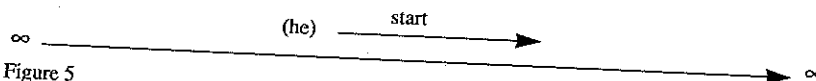


Figure 5

The important point here is that this tense<sup>4</sup> of the subjunctive locates its event in time but does not indicate where; all we know is that it is located somewhere subsequent to the place of the indicative verb in the main clause.

4. I am omitting the so-called "past" subjunctive because, although many speakers still occasionally use it, it is restricted to auxiliary verbs and the copula in formal contexts, and many younger speakers claim that they no longer use it. If indeed it has disappeared, this is the outcome of a development which has been going on for some centuries and can be understood as the result of an inherent contradiction in the form itself (cf. Hirtle 1975: 13-17).

This is very different from the tenses of the indicative, which always relate their event to the present instant, an instant which usually represents the moment of speech but may be represented somewhere beyond that moment, as in much science fiction, or before that moment, to give a historic present. Representing this unique instant divides the time line into two time-spheres, the past and the non-past, each of which is made up of universe time oriented toward the future. There are two tenses in the indicative each of which refers the realization of its event to one of the time-spheres. This can be depicted as in Figure 6.



Figure 6

This diagram is not intended to signify that time in the past moves toward the future, which would be nonsense, but rather to suggest the impression of the present as "the ever-fleeting boundary between the past and the future" (Jespersen 1931/1954, IV: 1). In other words, each time we represent the present we get the impression that it has moved ahead, that the past time-sphere has extended a little further, that the present is "a continuously moving point" (Quirk et al. 1985:175): time marches on. There are, of course, many variations observable in the use of these two tenses, but all can be seen to be the outcome of situating a representation of event time somewhere in universe time represented in this way (cf. Hirtle, 1995).

To complete this summary description of the moods in English, it remains to bring out the relations between them to show that they form a system. It was Guillaume, reflecting on the French verb, who first realized that there is a necessary order in calling to mind an event in these three ways: seeing it as real presupposes that it is possible, and seeing it as possible presupposes that it is conceivable. In terms of the representations of universe time we have just described, this amounts to a gradual build-up of the time image: one must first represent time as an endless stretch before one can situate a subject in an endless stretch of time; and one must have an undivided time line oriented toward the future before one can depict an instant dividing the time line into two parts thus oriented. This type of reflection led Guillaume to see the different moods as arising one after the other in the same operation of forming a representation of universe time to locate the event. And so the system of mood is essentially an operation for representing time, an operation which can be intercepted at three different points in English — very early to give a minimal representation of time, at a later point in the course of the operation to give a partly formed representation and at the

final point to produce a completely formed representation. This manner of viewing mood is depicted in Figure 7, which brings together the three possible resulting representations of universe time in English<sup>5</sup>, linking them by means of the single operation of chronogenesis, depicted by a vertical vector.

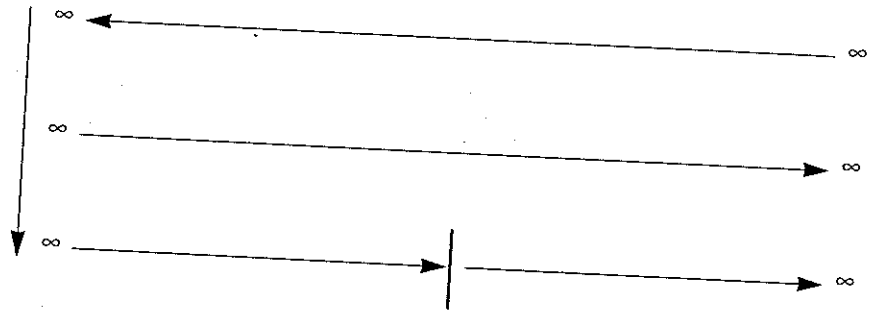


Figure 7

Since this is not the place to explore in any further detail the system of mood in English, this presentation must suffice to give a summary view of it and to suggest how, as one of the preconscious mental operations undertaken each time a speaker wishes to express something by means of a verb, mood contributes to constructing the representation of time. It has helped to make clearer the distinction between absolute tenses and relative tenses and even to extend it to include reference to / no reference to the speaker's presence in space. Describing the contribution of mood in this way has the further advantage of making the role of tense much clearer: tense does locate an event in time, but in three different ways, depending on the manner in which universe time is represented. It can thus be seen that the tenses in each mood differ because they are largely conditioned by the manner in which universe time is represented.

It remains for us to examine the question of the status of the have + past participle form, which Comrie left undecided. It seems clear that this form cannot be considered another type of tense since in the indicative (*he has started / he had started*) it refers to the present, but in the subjunctive (*... that he have started*) and in the quasi-nominal (*(to) have started / having started*) it embodies no reference to the present.

5. It should be kept in mind that the system described here is that of the English verb, where, as was pointed out, the relation between person and time appears to be the conditioning relationship. In other languages equally coherent systems are found, based on different relationships.

That is, this form, exactly like the simple form, is found in both absolute and in relative tenses, depending on the mood of the verb. It does not therefore institute a new way of locating an event in time. Should it then be considered an aspect? The particularity of *have* + past participle is that it situates in time, not the accomplishment of the event expressed by the past participle but rather what results from it. An anglophone who says, for example, *I have lost my keys*, is not interested in past happenings but in the present situation ('I don't have my keys') and in giving information about how it came about. That is to say, the verb here, thanks to its tense, locates in universe time the internal temporal constituency of the event's result phase; it situates in the present of speech a stretch of the duration of what arose after and resulted from the accomplishment of the event (cf. Hirtle 1975 for all the detail). Comrie expresses this much more succinctly when he points out that this form "expresses a relation between two time-points" (1976: 52), but since he does not see whether it is the relation between two points in universe time or two points in event time, he cannot determine whether this involves a tense or an aspect. Once one has distinguished between these two ways of representing time one can see that the relation between two time-points involves only event time here: *have* + past participle represents what exists at some point after the accomplishment of the event regardless of where that may be in universe time. Thus, quite independently of how universe time is represented, *have* + past participle views the internal temporal constituency of an event from a point outside and afterward it and so is an aspect.

One difficulty remains: the type of aspect expressed by *have* + past participle is based on a relationship not foreseen in Comrie's analysis, which bases the diverse expressions of aspect on the imperfective vs. perfective dichotomy (cf. 1976: 25). In this form, however, it is not just a matter of perfectivity, of representing the event "as a single whole" (1976: 16), but of representing it from a point afterwards, in its result phase. That is, what is involved here is not a matter of representing an event in part vs. representing it as a beginning-to-end whole, but rather of representing it from the inside (whether in part or as a whole) vs. representing it from afterwards. In other words, the basis of the system of aspect in English is the inside vs. afterwards dichotomy. To distinguish this new basis for aspect clearly, Guillaume introduces the terms **immanent** and **transcendent**, and incidentally offers a means for explaining the historical development from Latin to French, with its compound verb forms (*avoir* + past participle)<sup>6</sup>. Granted this broader view of aspect, which permits us to analyze *have* + past participle not as a perfective but as a transcendent aspect, we can not only settle Comrie's question about how to treat this verb form, but understand the systematic difference between languages like Latin and Russian, which have not



developed compound forms for aspect, and languages like English and French, which have.

Fully aware that the succinctness of these remarks may inhibit comprehension, I must now conclude. I only hope the above description of mood in English will suffice to establish the fact that when grammarians speak of tense as locating an event in time they presuppose two things: that the time contained in the event has been represented, as Comrie saw, and that the time for containing the event has also been represented. Without something to locate and somewhere to locate it, tense simply cannot function. That is, unless both aspect and mood have been brought into play, tense cannot fulfill its role of situating an event with its event time in universe time. And until grammarians recognize the true role of mood as a grammatical system and how it provides a link between aspect and tense, they will not be able to get a clear view of chronogenesis, the time-representing system in the verb.

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6. For a description of the system of aspect in French and how it developed from the system of Latin based on the imperfective vs. perfective dichotomy, see Valin 1965/1994 (in English translation, Hirtle 1975, Appendix).

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