A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF WADA'S THEORY OF TENSE IN ENGLISH

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This article is a critical comment on Naoaki Wada's theory of tense, and its application to indirect speech, as it is to be found in Wada (1998a, 1998b). The author raises a number of (what he considers to be) problems for this theory. He also defends his own theory of tense against the criticism which Wada levels at it.*

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1. Introduction

There exist several—often radically different—theories of tense in English, and the key argument for their viability is usually the analysis which the theory offers in connection with the use of tense forms in IRS (=Indirect Reported Speech).¹ In Declerck (1991), I have offered a comprehensive theory of tense and adduced arguments in support of the ensuing analysis of tense in IRS (1991: 157–192). (The latter is further elaborated in Declerck & Tanaka (1996) and Declerck (1999a).) I have also argued against the alternative analyses proposed by Jespersen (1924: 290–299), Reichenbach (1947), Allen (1966), Brecht (1974: 500–502), Comrie (1986), and Salkie & Reed (1997)—each of

* I would like to thank the two anonymous *EL* reviewers for the remarks they have made. I am also very grateful to Naoaki Wada for his comments on the first draft of this article. Whenever possible, I have adapted the text in the light of these. However, I obviously could not take into account any remarks or explanations that were not to be found in the two articles that I am discussing here. Besides, there remain numerous points on which Wada and I disagree.

¹ As in Declerck (1999a), I will refer to sentences like *John said "I am ill"* and *John said he was ill* as instances of "Direct Reported Speech" (DRS) and "Indirect Reported Speech" (IRS), respectively.

which is based on a particular theory of tense.

The latest theory of tense has been proposed by Wada (1998a) and has resulted in a particular analysis of IRS in Wada (1998b—this journal). Since Wada too criticizes alternative theories, including mine, I feel entitled to examine his proposals in detail. This is the purpose of the present article. The conclusion will be that Wada's critique of my tense theory and my analysis of IRS is not justified and that Wada's own approach is inadequate in various respects.

The structure of the article is as follows. In sections 2 and 3, I will sketch the basic assumptions of my tense theory and Wada's, respectively. In section 4, I will have a critical look at Wada's theory. Section 5 will examine the merits and flaws of the analyses of tense in IRS. Section 6, finally, will be a summary of the various conclusions arrived at.

2. Declerck's Theory of Tense

Declerck (1995: 3) stresses the importance of distinguishing carefully between a tense and a tense form. A tense is the grammatical expression of a particular temporal meaning. This means that a tense is an abstract concept: it is the correlation of a particular meaning with a particular form. The form in question may be a morpheme (e.g. the past tense morpheme, the past participle morpheme ...), an auxiliary (e.g. *will*), or a combination of these (e.g. *would* or *would have*). A tense form is a concrete verb form (such as *walked*, *would walk* or *would have walked*) involving this kind of formal expression of a tense meaning. It is important to see that for each tense there is only one such formal expression (tense form), and that these are interpreted compositionally, e.g. *would have walked* = "PAST + *will* + *have* ...-en." (For further details concerning the compositionality of the tenses, see Declerck (1995: 32–33).)

In accordance with the definition of tense given above, the meaning (semantics) of a tense is the temporal structure that is realized when a tense form locates a particular situation in time. Such a tense structure consists of times (such as Reichenbach's (1947) *E*, *R* and *S*) and temporal relations holding between them. According to Reichenbach, the past perfect expresses the structure "*E* before *R* before *S*." In his theory this structure represents the semantics of the past perfect.

It follows from the above definition of tense that each tense has one

and only one meaning. This invariant meaning is the tense structure (semantic structure) of the tense. It follows that we can discern as many tenses as there are tense-structural ways of locating situations in time. However, it is clear that some tenses are semantically related to each other. The English tenses fall into what I call "past time-sphere tenses" (the past tense or preterite, the past perfect, the conditional tense, the conditional perfect) and "present time-sphere tenses" (the present tense, present perfect, future tense and future perfect). The former show past time morphology, whereas the latter do not.² However, it is in keeping with my definition of tense that I speak of eight tenses grouped into two "families" rather than of two tenses, since we have eight different forms, each of which expresses a tense structure of its own.³

So, the starting-point of my theory is that the use of a tense form in English implies that the speaker views the time of the situation referred to as either past or non-past with respect to the time functioning as "temporal zero-point," which is usually the moment of speech. (For reasons to be made clear below, I will henceforth use "STO" as an abbreviation for "the time of the situation referred to.") That is, any tense form locates its STO either in the "past time-sphere" or in the "present time-sphere." These time-spheres are no objective physical entities but represent the ways in which an English language user conceptualizes time. The past time-sphere is conceived as a timespan of indefinite length which lies wholly before (and hence does not include) the temporal zero-point (henceforth: t_0). To locate an STO in this time-sphere the speaker uses a past tense form (preterite).⁴ The present time-sphere is conceived as a timespan of indefinite length which includes t_0 and is divided by it into three "sectors": the portion of the present time-sphere that starts before t_0 and reaches up to it is the

² Wada (1998b: 173) is mistaken when he remarks that in my theory the distinction between the past and the present time-sphere is not made on the basis of morphology—see e.g. Declerck (1991: 16).

³ The above eight tenses do not exhaust the possibilities. There are other forms (e.g. *will have been going to do*) for which no traditional tense label exists but which also express a structure of their own.

⁴ In other words, past tense morphology is associated with "past time-sphere," i.e. with the idea "(completely) past with respect to t_0 ."

“pre-present sector”; the portion that is centred on t_0 is the “present sector”; and the portion that follows t_0 is the “post-present sector.” The tenses used to locate STOs in these three sectors are the present perfect, the present tense and the future tense, respectively.

For ease of reference, I use the term “absolute sectors” to refer to the above three sectors plus the past time-sphere. (These timespans can be called “absolute” because they are defined in direct relation to t_0 .) The four tenses that are used to locate STOs in one of these four sectors are therefore called “absolute tenses.” It is typical of absolute tenses that they relate the STO directly to t_0 (by locating it in one of the absolute sectors) and not to another STO or reference time.⁵

By using an absolute tense form, the speaker establishes a “temporal domain” in one of the absolute sectors. A temporal domain is a set of times which either consists of a single STO (=the time of a single situation) or comprises several STOs that are temporally related to each other by tense forms. In *John walked too quickly* the absolute past tense form *walked* establishes a past time-sphere domain (or “past domain” for short). In this case the domain is a singleton: it contains only one STO. In the following example, the domain contains four STOs:

- (1) John said that he had walked a long way, that he was tired and that he would go to bed early.

The first clause contains an absolute tense form (*said*) which locates its STO in the past time-sphere and in doing so creates a past domain. Each of the STOs of the other clauses is temporally related to the STO of *said*, not to t_0 . This means that all the tense forms of (1) locate their STOs in one and the same temporal domain, which can be represented as a Venn-diagram. (Figures representing temporal domains in this way are to be found in Declerck (1995, 1996, 1997a, 1997b) and Declerck & Tanaka (1996)).

In order to be able to talk about domains, it is necessary to introduce some further terminology. Any time that serves, or can serve, as the origin of a temporal relation expressed by a tense form is called a “time

⁵ Wada (1988a: 108) is mistaken when he writes that I do not distinguish two but three “absolute tenses”: the present, past and future tenses. Actually, I distinguish four, since I also treat the present perfect as an absolute tense.

of orientation" (henceforth: TO). (Needless to say, t_0 is the most basic TO in the system.) Since we can always introduce a new STO into a domain and relate it there to any time we like, any time contained in a domain is a potential TO. The STO establishing the domain (i.e. the one referred to by the absolute tense form) is called the "central TO." In (1) the central TO is the STO of *said*. The other STOs are temporally related to this. In technical terms, I will say that these STOs are "temporally bound" by the central TO. The central TO is thus the "binding" TO. When an STO is bound, the tense form used is a "relative" tense form. For example, the past perfect form *had worked* in the first *that*-clause of (1) is a relative tense form representing its STO as anterior to the central TO (*said*).⁶ The preterite form *was* is also a relative tense form: unlike *said*, which establishes the domain (and is therefore an absolute tense form), *was* expresses a relation in the past domain, viz. the relation of simultaneity.⁷ And similarly, *would go* is a relative tense form, representing its STO as posterior to the central TO.

Since the time of a situation can always serve as the binding TO for the time of another situation, and is therefore always an actual or potential TO, I have replaced the cumbersome term "time of a/the situation" by "situation-TO" and abbreviated this to "STO."⁸ It follows that we can refine the definition of temporal domain by saying that it is a set of (one or more) TOs, each of which, except for the central TO, is bound by another TO. Since a domain can only be established by a tense form, it necessarily contains at least one STO. If an absolute tense form is used, the STO is the central TO of the domain (and possibly the only TO in it). If a relative tense form is used, the STO is temporally bound by another TO, which may be either the central TO or any other TO in the domain (see below).

Another element of the theory (also adopted by Wada (1998a: 138))

⁶ The past perfect and the conditional tense are by definition relative tenses because they do not relate their STO directly to t_0 .

⁷ The difference between absolute and relative tense forms, and the means of identifying a past tense form as being either absolute or relative, is investigated in Declerck (1995). Lack of space forbids repeating the arguments here.

⁸ In Declerck (1991) I used the abbreviation "TO_{sit.}"

is that "STO" (which Wada calls "event time") means the time interval taken up by that part of the situation that is being referred to (and located in time) by the clause involving the relevant tense form. That is, we must distinguish between the STO and the time of the full (complete) situation as it actually takes place. In *Two minutes ago John was in the library*, the STO is the time of that part of the situation that coincides with the time indicated by *two minutes ago*. The time of the full situation may be much longer—John may have been in the library for hours and may still be there at t_0 —but this is not what the sentence makes a statement about. All that is claimed in the sentence is that two minutes ago it was the case that John was in the library *at that time*. It is therefore necessary to distinguish carefully between the STO and the "time of the full situation." (This is not to say that the two cannot coincide. They do when the sentence refers to the complete situation, i.e., if the sentence receives a "bounded" interpretation.)

It should be clear now that there are two kinds of preterite. In example (1), *said* establishes the domain, and is therefore an absolute tense form, whereas *was* expresses the domain-internal relation of simultaneity, and is therefore a relative tense form. (The past perfect and the conditional tense, on the other hand, can only be used as relative tenses.)

When a relative tense is used, the STO need not always be related to the central TO of the domain into which it is incorporated. The binding TO may also be another TO in the domain. For example, in (2) the talking is represented as simultaneous with John's having a parrot, which is itself represented as anterior to the remembering.

(2) I remembered that John had once had a parrot who talked.

It should be noted that in (1) and (2) the relative tense form used to express simultaneity is each time the preterite, irrespective of whether the binding TO is or is not the central TO of the domain. This is because there is a single system of relative tenses to express relations in a past domain: we always use the preterite for simultaneity, the past perfect for anteriority, and the conditional tense for posteriority,⁹ irrespec-

⁹ This is a slight simplification. Posteriority in a past domain can be expressed not only by the conditional tense (*would* + infinitive) but also by forms like *was going to* or *was to*. The latter have specific connotations.

tive of whether the binding TO is the central TO or a bound TO. (See also below.)

An important point is that simultaneity expressed by a tense is defined in terms of coincidence, not overlap. This does not mean that the two situations must actually cover exactly the same timespan. As explained above, simultaneity (as expressed by a tense) is a relation between an STO and another TO, not a relation between the times of "full" situations. In *Bill said that John was crying*, the STO of the *that*-clause is not the time of the full situation of John crying but just that part of it that coincides with the STO of *said*. The distinction between the STO and the time of the full situation is therefore essential to the claim that the simultaneity relation expressed by a relative tense is a relation of coincidence.

The above principles represent no more than the starting-point of the tense model offered in Declerck (1991, 1997a), but they will do for our present purpose. What is especially important is the notion of temporal domain. That we cannot do without this concept should be clear from the fact that there exist complex sentences in which each of the various tense forms relates its STO to one of the other STOs:

- (3) After the meeting was finished he told me that he would ask Betty why she hadn't replied to the letter he had sent her after he had learnt about her problems.

It is obvious that only one of the tense forms here (viz. *told*) relates its STO directly to t_0 . The other tense forms relate their STOs either to this STO or to another one, which is itself related (directly or via another STO) to it. In this way the various tense forms create a structure of temporal relations, and the various STOs form a structured set of STOs, which is exactly what I mean by "temporal domain."

The notion of temporal domain is essential because it underlies the distinction between (pure) absolute tenses (representing an STO as central TO of a domain), (pure) relative tenses (relating an STO to a TO in a domain established by another verb form) and absolute-relative tenses (which both establish a domain and relate their STO to the central TO, e.g. the future perfect).

3. Wada's Theory of Tense

Wada's theory of tense involves the following premises. Firstly, there are only two tenses in English, viz. the past tense and the pres-

ent tense. This means that any tense form “establishes” either the “past time-sphere” or the “present time-sphere,” depending on whether it shows past or present tense morphology. Secondly, an adequate theory of tense must be a “compositional” tense theory which “distinguishes a level of tense structure from a level of tense interpretation” (Wada 1998a: 107):

At the level of tense structure, the semantic (or tense) structure of a tense form represents its original temporal value. At the level of tense interpretation, the temporal value represented by a tense form is finally determined under the influence of such elements as time adverbials, syntactic environments, and contexts. (1998a: 107)

A third ingredient of the theory is the following:

In English, a finite predicate consists of both the absolute tense component (henceforth the A-component) and the relative component (henceforth the R-component). (...) The A-component is represented by a tense morpheme establishing either the past or present (or non-past) time-sphere. This component is absolute because the establishment of a time-sphere is based on a direct relation to the speaker's point of view, which adheres to S [= speech time], i.e. the absolute time point on the time line. The R-component is represented by the time of an event (or a situation). This component is relative in the sense that the position of the event time is not tense-structurally determined in a direct relation to S. (...) The temporal relation of the A-component to the R-component is always that of inclusion in the sense that the event time associated with the R-component always obtains somewhere (or is always included) in a time-sphere associated with the A-component. (1998b: 173–174)

Another important claim is that “auxiliary verbs have the same status as main verbs, at least semantically” (1998a: 108). It follows that an auxiliary which “conveys semantic content” (1998a: 108) expresses a situation and therefore has an “event time” (=STO). Thus, *will* and *have* are treated as main verbs indicating “prediction” and “resultative state,” respectively; the STO of *will* is the time when the prediction obtains, while that of *have* is the time when the resultative state obtains. The bare infinitive which follows *will* also denotes a situation with an STO and also expresses a temporal relation, viz. “non-anteriority” (1998a: 114). However, the contribution of *will/would* + infinitive

is to be found on the level of "tense interpretation" only. At the level of tense structure (semantic structure), all that a form like *would come* expresses is that the past tense establishes the past time-sphere and that the STO of *would* is included in that time-sphere.

4. Evaluation of Wada's Theory of Tense

4.1. Comparison with Declerck's Theory

Wada's theory resembles mine in many respects. However, it drastically differs from mine in that (without adducing any argumentation) Wada rejects my notion of temporal domain: whereas I say that *loved* in *He loved me* establishes a domain in the past time-sphere, Wada says that *loved* "establishes the past time-sphere" (1998a: 125). This failure to distinguish between "past time-sphere" and "past (time-sphere) domain" renders it impossible for him to accept my category of relative tenses (i.e. tenses without an absolute component, which merely express a temporal relation in an already established domain). It is in keeping with this that Wada does not treat *will* and *have* as grammatical markers of a temporal relation but rather as main verbs. Since main verbs have an "event time" (STO) of their own, a form like *would have come* is analysed, not as a single verb form with a single STO and a complex tense structure, but as involving three main verbs, and therefore three STOs. In order to account for these different STOs and the temporal complexity, Wada introduces the level of "tense interpretation." It is at this level (at which temporal information provided by a temporal adverbial or the context also plays a role) that *would have come* is interpreted as "STO ("event time") of *come* is anterior to the STO of *have*, which is itself posterior to, or simultaneous with, the STO of *would*, which is included in the past time-sphere." At the level of the tense structure, the form only expresses "past tense creates past time-sphere" (=A-component) and "STO of *will* is included in that past time-sphere" (=R-component). This analysis differs from mine in several respects. Firstly, I consider *would* and *have* to express domain-internal relations which form part of the semantic structure of the conditional perfect. (The structure of this tense is "STO anterior to TO₁; TO₁ posterior to TO₂; TO₂ past with respect to basic TO (=usually t₀).") *Would* (=PAST+*will*) expresses the latter two relations, *have ...-en* the anteriority relation.) Secondly, in my theory, "tense interpretation" refers to the temporal information

that is furnished exclusively by the semantics of the tenses (i.e. the tense structures). What Wada calls “tense interpretation” I refer to as “temporal interpretation”: this is the level on which the eventual location in time of an STO is deduced from the meaning (tense structure) of the tense used as well as from the linguistic context (e.g. a time adverbial) or/and the extralinguistic context.

Another major difference between Wada’s theory and mine concerns the definition of simultaneity. As explained above, I take simultaneity (as expressed by a tense) to be a relation between an STO and another TO, not a relation between the times of “full” situations. The simultaneity relation expressed by a relative tense is therefore a relation of coincidence. In Wada’s theory, however, simultaneity is defined as a relation of inclusion, i.e. either coincidence or overlap (1998a: 122–123, 140),¹⁰ in spite of the statement that “the event time is defined not as the time of a whole event or situation itself, but as the time point or period of a relevant part of the event or situation which is talked of in the sentence. This definition of the event time corresponds to Declerck’s (1991a, 1991b) definition of the time of the situation” (1998a: 110). However, this strict definition of STO (which plays a role in some of Wada’s arguments) is quite unnecessary if simultaneity is defined in terms of inclusion (i.e. strict coincidence or overlap): in the example *Five minutes ago John was in the library. (So that’s presumably where you can find him)*, there is no reason (in Wada’s theory) why we should not take the time of the situation (of John being in the library) to be the time of the complete situation. After all, the relation of simultaneity between the time of the situation and the time indicated by *five minutes ago* may be one of overlap (=Wada’s “inclusion”).

4.2. The Definition of “Tense”

In my opinion, there are various problems with Wada’s definition of tense and with his claim that there are only two absolute tenses in English. To begin with, Wada (1988a: 108–109) adduces five arguments in support of this claim, but I do not find any of them convincing. The

¹⁰ Wada himself speaks of “strict coincidence” and “inclusion.” This corresponds with what I call “(strict) coincidence” and “overlap.” As in Declerck (1991), I use “inclusion” as a cover-term for these two.

main argument is the following:

English has only two tense morphemes, i.e. the present and the past tense morpheme. From the morphological point of view, it is possible to say that English has only two (absolute) tenses. (1988: 108)

This argument is carefully considered and rejected in Declerck (1991: 8–13). Wada's second piece of evidence is "that not only *will* (and *shall*) but also other modals such as *can* and *may* can be used in sentences referring to future time" (1988: 109). My answer would be that, unlike the future tense, these modals refer to the present: they express the PRESENT possibility of a future happening. This is in keeping with the fact that their future tense versions (*will be possible [to/that]*) make use of *will*. The third piece of evidence is the following:

Will shares some syntactic properties with other modal auxiliaries (...). First of all, modals have only tensed or finite forms, possessing no base forms and nonfinite forms. Secondly, they have no person/number contrast. Thirdly, they always require the bare infinitive as their complement. (1988: 109)

However, these data just prove that *will* belongs to the class of auxiliaries. They do not prove that *will* (as future tense marker) is a MODAL auxiliary. (In fact, I think one has to distinguish between the tense auxiliary *will* and the modal auxiliary *will* (as in *I've asked him to do it but he won't*).) Wada's fourth argument is that "we often cannot easily distinguish the future use of *will* from the volitional use of *will*" (1988: 109). This is correct, but does not mean that there is no distinction between them. Besides, *will* can express several other meanings besides volition, e.g. characteristic behaviour (*Boys will be boys*), assumption (*This will be the document they were referring to*), habit (*He will often go for a short walk after supper*), etc. Wada's final argument is that "just as other modals have their past tense counterparts (e.g. *could* and *might*), *will* has its morphological past tense counterpart *would*. (...) If we treat *will* as a future tense marker, we must tackle the problem of how to handle this parallel between *will* and *would*" (1998a: 109). However, it is not clear to me in what way this constitutes a "problem": I hold that the future tense expresses no more than "STO posterior to binding TO," in other words, that *will* expresses the relation of posteriority. With present tense morphology, the binding TO is t_0 or a TO posterior to it, so that *will* is used as a future tense marker; with past tense morphology, the binding TO is past, so that

would expresses posteriority in a past domain. I quite fail to see how this can be seen as supporting Wada's theory rather than mine.

A second problem for Wada's tense theory concerns his definition of "absolute tense." According to Wada, the two absolute tenses have both an absolute component and a relative one. The A-component is that the tense "establishes" (1998a: 125) the past or present time-sphere. In my opinion, the two time-spheres are a question of how English language users *conceptualize* time. That is, the two time-spheres are not established by tense forms but are permanently present in the mind of the language user. What a past tense form does is not establish the past time-sphere (=A-component) plus represent the STO as simultaneous with it (=R-component), but simply locate the STO in the past time-sphere and in doing so establish a past time-sphere domain. In my opinion, only the latter analysis does justice to the concept of "absolute tense": an absolute tense form relates the STO directly to t_0 (by locating it in one of the four absolute sectors). Saying that the semantic structure of an absolute tense involves a relative component seems to me a contradiction in terms. Wada does not share this opinion. According to him, it is typical of the tenses that are tense-structurally absolute that "the position of the event time is not tense-structurally determined in a direct relation to S" (1988b: 174).

In my opinion, this view is not unproblematic. Wada (1998a: 108) denies that "*will*+infinitive" forms the "future tense," but argues that "*have*+past participle" forms the "perfect tense" (1988a: 127-131). It is not made clear what these different claims are based on. I find it bizarre that of two comparable structures used to locate an STO in time, only one is accorded the status of a tense. Wada gives no convincing arguments why, unlike what happens in the case of *will/would*+infinitive, "the process of combining the situation denoted by *have* with that denoted by the past participle is carried out at the tense-structure level. In other words, the form *have*+past participle as a whole is considered to be a meaningful grammatical unit, i.e. a template" (1998a: 128). Besides, if (as Wada claims) "*have*+past participle" forms the (nonfinite) "perfect tense," and *have* is a main verb, which can therefore appear in the present or past tense, then it follows logically that *has come* and *had come* must be tense forms whose semantic structure contains an R-component that expresses more than "STO of *have* is included in the present/past time-sphere." (In fact, Wada

admits as much when he says that “the form *have*+past participle as a whole is considered to be a meaningful grammatical unit, i.e. a template.”) In my opinion, it follows that Wada should admit the existence of the present perfect and the past perfect as true tenses, next to the present tense and the preterite. But, of course, there is no reason then why the same should not be true of *will have come* and *would have come*, and also of *will come* and *would come*. In other words, I think that Wada ultimately has to acknowledge the existence of at least eight tenses (grouped into two “families”: present and past), just as I do in my theory. However, Wada cannot do so while upholding the basic claims of his theory. Whereas I treat the present perfect as an absolute tense, the past perfect as a (pure) relative tense and the future perfect as an absolute-relative tense, Wada’s theory can only treat all of them alike, i.e. as present or past tenses with both an A-component and an R-component: “In English, a finite predicate consists of both the A-component and the R-component, whereas a nonfinite predicate consists only of the R-component” (1998a: 113). (Note that all eight tense forms above are finite predicates.)

4.3. The “Tense Interpretation” Level

I cannot help feeling bewildered by Wada’s (1998b: 175) claim that in *If you come with me, you will enjoy the party*, the tense form “*come*,” which is an absolute tense form, receives the non-deictic interpretation.” On the same page “deictic” and “non-deictic” have been equated with “absolute” and “relative”: “in the former interpretation, the event time of a finite predicate is interpreted in a direct relation to S, while in the latter, it is interpreted in relation to another event time as a base time” (1998b: 175). The only possible conclusion from this is that there must exist absolute tense forms that receive a non-absolute interpretation, e.g. *come* in the above example. However, the notion of absolute tense is claimed to constitute the semantic structure (tense structure) of the form. How can a form yield an interpretation which runs counter to its own semantics? I agree that the temporal interpretation of a tense form is the result of welding the semantics of the tense with the temporal information present in the linguistic and extra-linguistic (pragmatic) context, but I do not think anyone would dispute the claim that the possible temporal interpretations are constrained by

the semantics of the tense.¹¹ (If this were not the case, there would be no reason why sentences like **I will see him yesterday* or **He was ill tomorrow* are ungrammatical.)

Apparently, Wada himself is aware of this problem, for in his discussion of *If you come with me, you will enjoy the party* he tries to explain the problem away:

This non-deictic interpretation of *come* can be ascribed to the property of *if*-clauses (...). Since the situations of the *if*-clause and the main clause form an intensional domain, the position of the *if*-clause time is determined based on that of the main-clause time as the relevant time of orientation (in this case the time of enjoying). In this case, the time of actualization of the main-clause situation in question is in the future, so the *if*-clause time is also located in the future. (1998a: 117)

I see four problems for this explanation. First, it is not applicable to other types of subclause with a present tense referring to the future, such as the relative clause in *Soon they will invent a drug that cures AIDS*, or the *because*-clause in *If you go out after 8 you will be arrested because you break the curfew*. Secondly, even if we restrict ourselves to conditionals, it is not true that the reason why “the *if*-clause time is (...) located in the future” is that “the time of actualization of the main-clause situation (...) is in the future.” Consider examples like *If she comes here herself, it { was/is/will be/has been } a waste of time to write her a letter*. Thirdly, Wada’s explanation is also vitiated by the fact that a present tense in an *if*-clause depending on a MC [= main clause] in the future tense need not automatically refer to the future. This is clear from examples like *If they’re already in London, they will be here in about two hours*. Last but not least, a sentence like *If John is here, we will talk to him* is ambiguous, not vague, between a present time reading of *is* and a future time reading.¹² This means that the

¹¹ Note that Wada’s “tense-interpretation level” also includes pragmatics. In Wada (1998a: 113) he equates it with “the stage of practical use.”

¹² The sentence can be disambiguated by the context:

- (i) “Have you heard? John is back in town.” — “Splendid! If John is here, we will talk to him.”
- (ii) “John is coming back here next week.” — “Splendid! If John is here, we will talk to him.”

That the two readings are a question of ambiguity, not vagueness, is clear from

two readings correspond with different semantic structures, and are not “interpretive variants” (1998a: 122) of the same semantic structure, as is claimed by Wada.

In sum, there is conclusive evidence that Wada's explanation of the future time interpretation of *come* in *If you come with me, you will enjoy the party* is mistaken. However, this means that he fails to solve a problem which concerns the very basis of his theory: on the one hand, he writes that “a tense structure serves as the ‘template’ for determining the temporal value at the tense-interpretation level” (1998a: 113); on the other hand, he explicitly claims that a tense form can yield an interpretation which runs counter to its own semantics:

At the tense-structure level, the semantic (or tense) structure of a given tense form (i.e. a temporal template) represents its original temporal value. At the tense-interpretation level, on the other hand, the original value of a tense form shows up by default, *changes into a new value* or is further specified, under the influence of elements other than tense structure such as time adverbials, syntactic environments and contexts. (1998a: 137) (my emphasis)

In my opinion, the two claims referred to above, which are cornerstones of Wada's theory, cannot be reconciled with each other, unless the meaning of the term “template” is stretched to a point that the notion is no longer workable.

The claim that the “tense interpretation” may run counter to the “tense structure” underlies not only Wada's analysis of *If you come with me, you will enjoy the party*, but also that of *Rieko seems to be sick*—Wada claims that “the *to*-infinitive, which represents posteriority at the tense-structure level, can finally receive a simultaneous reading at the tense-interpretation level” (1998a: 120) — as well as Wada's (1998a: 121) analysis of *I am happy to see you here* (where the *to*-infinitive receives an anterior reading at the tense-interpretation level) and his analysis of *The window was broken* (where “the past participle represents anteriority” at the tense-structure level but “is interpreted as expressing simultaneity at the tense-interpretation level” (1998a: 120)).

Lakoff's (1970) well-known test for ambiguity: in *If John is here, we will talk to him, and if Mary is here, we will talk to her too*, the VP *is here* has to receive the same (present or future) reading in the two coordinate sentences.

The confusion between “tense interpretation” and “temporal interpretation” is also clear from Wada’s (1998b: 175) discussion of

- (4) One day, Naomi said to Oscar that she saw him the day before.
(Comrie (1986: 273))

Wada’s comment is as follows:

At the tense-structure level, both *said* and *saw* only establish the past time-sphere, representing their event times somewhere in that time-sphere. The temporal relation between the two situations is vague at this level. It is at the level of tense interpretation that the relation between the event times under consideration is determined. Since the event time of the MC verb is normally interpreted in relation to S, the event time of *said* is viewed as coming before S. That is, *said* receives a deictic interpretation. The event time of *saw*, by contrast, is construed as coming before the event time of *said* as a base time because of the lexical property of the relative time adverb *the day before*.

Thus *saw* is interpreted non-deictically. (1998b: 175)

What is said here differs from my own theory of tense in some subtle, but crucial, respects. I analyse both *said* and *saw* as absolute tense forms. (For lack of a simultaneity reading, *saw* cannot be analysed as a relative past tense here.) That is, both *said* and *saw* relate their STO directly to t_0 and in doing so establish an (each time different) past domain. The temporal relation between the two domains is not expressed by the tense forms, because both yield an absolute (deictic) *tense interpretation*. However, the relation in question is clear at the level of *temporal interpretation*, because it is expressed by *the day before*. In this view, *tense interpretation* is what is to be concluded from the semantic structure of the tense used, while *temporal interpretation* is what is to be derived from any kind of temporal information that is to be found in the clause itself (i.e. the tense structure plus the information contributed by a temporal adverbial, a temporal conjunction, the lexical meaning and Aktionsart of the verb, the grammatical aspect used, etc.) or in the linguistic or extralinguistic (pragmatic) context. I thus make a clear distinction between temporal interpretation and tense interpretation. Unlike Wada’s use of the term, “tense interpretation” in my theory is exclusively determined by the semantics (tense structure) of the tense in question. (Another difference is that I treat many aspects of meaning on the level of (my) “tense interpretation,” whereas Wada relegates them to (what I call) “temporal interpretation.”) My

view that “tense interpretation” is exclusively determined by the semantics of the tense is illustrated by the fact that I claim that there are five past time-sphere tenses, with the following semantic structures:

absolute past tense: STO located in past time-sphere (as central TO of a past domain)

relative past tense: STO represented as simultaneous with some TO in a past domain

past perfect (=relative tense): STO represented as anterior to some TO in a past domain

conditional tense (=relative tense): STO represented as posterior to some TO in a past domain

conditional perfect (= “doubly” relative tense): STO represented as anterior to some TO which is represented as posterior to another TO in a past domain

Since Wada does not accept my notion of temporal domain—in an axiomatic way: there are no arguments raised against it—he cannot recognize the existence of relative tenses (expressing one or more relations in a domain). It follows that he cannot treat *will* and *have* as merely expressing a temporal relation, but has to treat them as main verbs, which raises all kinds of problems—see below.

4.4. The Present Perfect

Another problem for Wada's theory is the treatment of the present perfect. In my theory, the present perfect is an absolute tense locating an STO in the pre-present sector of the present time-sphere. According to Wada (1998a: 130), *has come* indicates two events: E_1 is the event time of *have*, which (because of the present tense morphology) is simultaneous with S, whereas E_2 is the time of coming, which because of the semantics of *have* and the past participle is “located in the past” (1998a: 130). This analysis raises intriguing questions. If the semantics of the present perfect is no more than “ E_1 included in (i.e. located ‘somewhere’ in) the present time-sphere” (as Wada claims), how can this lead to the more specific reading “event time of *have* is simultaneous with S” at Wada's level of “tense interpretation”? (I will come back to this problem below.) Also, are we to understand Wada's above claim that E_2 (the time of coming) is “located in the past” (1998a: 130) as meaning that *has come* is a present tense used to locate a situation in the past time-sphere? Can one component of the temporal structure of a tense form refer to the present time-sphere

while the other refers to the past time-sphere? I find this difficult to accept. How, for example, could we account then for the unacceptability of **He has left yesterday?*¹³ Besides, Wada himself seems to reject this conclusion in Wada (1998a: 128–129)—the relevant passages are quoted in footnote 13. Furthermore, there are many present perfect forms that are understood as representing their STO as continuing into the present (e.g. *I've been dating her (for weeks)*). How is this possible if the time of the dating is located in the past time-sphere, which is defined as lying completely before the present time-sphere?¹⁴ Clearly, we cannot solve these problems without having recourse to my notion of “pre-present sector of the present time-sphere.” This is inevitable, given the fact that t_0 may lie anywhere in the present time-sphere. The present time-sphere must contain three portions: one reaching up to t_0 (=the pre-present), one centred on t_0 (=the present sector) and one reaching forward from t_0 (=the post-present). However, it follows from this that there are four absolute tenses, i.e. four different ways of relating an STO directly to t_0 : the past tense, the present perfect, the present tense and the future tense. The latter three belong to the set of “present time-sphere tenses”—that is why they show present tense morphology—but there is no reason whatever for claiming that the present perfect and the future are no tenses. They can be used to locate an STO in time, and therefore answer the definition of “tense” as “the grammaticalization of location in time” (cf. Comrie (1985), Lyons (1977)).

¹³ Wada's explanation of this constraint involves the claims that “the form *have*+past participle is a grammatical unit expressing the template of a particular tense” (1998a: 128) and that in present perfect sentences “the temporal focus is directed at (...) the event time of the resultative state” (1998a: 129), i.e. at t_0 . However, the latter claim is an incorrect generalization. In *I have lived here since 1960, not since 1970!* the temporal focus is clearly directed at the time of my coming to live here (which is anterior to t_0). The same mistake is made in connection with the past perfect. According to Wada (1998a: 130), the time of the temporal focus (identified by the WC) in *Mana had left the hall when I arrived* is the “event time” of *had* (i.e. the time when the resultative state obtained). However, this sentence also allows the reading in which the WC specifies the time when Mana left the hall.

Apart from this, Wada's explanation cannot account for the fact that, although **We have worked in vain yesterday* is anyhow ungrammatical, *We will have worked in vain yesterday* can be perfectly acceptable in a suitable context—see Comrie (1985: 73).

¹⁴ The “hot news” perfect constitutes a further problem, but Wada simply discards this by saying that this use is “an exceptional case” (1998a: 141).

Wada's denial of the existence of a pre-present sector may not be quite explicit, but it is clear from passages like the following:¹⁵

The past time-sphere covers only the past area while the present tense time-sphere covers both the present and the future areas. (1998a: 113)

In *Hitomi is happy*, all the predicate *is* represents at the tense-structure level is that its event time obtains somewhere in the present time-sphere. (...) Why then, is the event time construed as coinciding with the speech time? Such a question arises because it might seem possible that the event time in question is related to an implicit time other than S, i.e. a future time, which is also in the present time-sphere. The answer lies in the fact that the predicate *is* is in the assertive form. Since the future is an unrealized temporal area, we usually cannot make an assertion about a future situation. What we can make an assertion about in the present time-sphere is a present situation because the present is a realized temporal area. Therefore, the predicate *is* is interpreted as referring to the present. (1998a: 116)

It becomes clear here why it is convenient for Wada to ignore the pre-present: the above reasoning does not explain why *is* is not interpreted as referring to the pre-present, although such a sector must exist, since the present time-sphere is not defined as beginning at S but rather as including S (1998a: 113–114).

The conclusion that there has to be a “pre-present” also vitiates the reasoning presented in the second of the above quotations. As pointed out by Wada himself, the claim that the semantic structure of the present tense is “present time-sphere established+STO included in this time-sphere” does not warrant the conclusion that (at the level of “tense interpretation”) *is happy* should be interpreted as “STO simultaneous with t_0 .” Wada suggests an explanation for the fact that *is happy* is not interpreted as lying in the post-present, but he does not say anything about the pre-present. His claim that his theory explains why “the predicate *is* is interpreted as referring to the present” (1998a: 116) is therefore unfounded.

¹⁵ In order to understand the second quotation it is necessary to know that “*will* denotes the modality of prediction, while in *Bruce loves Mary*, *loves* represents the modality of assertion” (1998a: 111).

It should be noted that the above criticism is a very strong piece of evidence against Wada's theory, especially because what has been said about *is happy* also applies to *will be happy* in *Hitomi will be happy*. In Wada's theory, at the tense-structure level, *will* only "establishes the present time-sphere" and locates its "event time" (=the time when the prediction obtains) "somewhere" in that time-sphere. This means that the "event time" of *will* may in principle be located at t_0 , or in the post-present or pre-present. However, Wada (1998a: 117) claims that the "event time" of *will* is always simultaneous with t_0 —a claim which his theory cannot account for. There is nothing in the theory ruling out the possibility that the "event time" of *will*, nor that of *be happy*, should lie in the pre-present, in other words that *Hitomi will be happy* could actually be read as "Hitomi has been going to be happy." (Note that in *Hitomi will be happy* there is no adverbial, contextual or pragmatic element that could induce the tense interpretation to be different from what is predicted by the tense structure.)

A further problem specifically concerns Wada's analysis of the perfect. In order to explain the meaning of the anteriority marker *have* Wada has recourse to the well-known notion of "current relevance" (1998a: 129, 139): the "event time" of *have* is the time when the resultative state obtains. Now the notion of current relevance is a very controversial one in the linguistic literature on tense. In Declerck (1991: 340–349) I have argued that resultativeness is only an implicature and does not form part of the semantics of the perfect tenses. Unfortunately, Wada shuns any discussion of the subject and simply posits the axiom that current relevance constitutes the meaning of *have*. The unacceptability of this approach becomes especially clear when Wada applies his theory to IRS (=indirect reported speech). As is well-known, a past perfect in IRS can be the "backshifted" version of either a present perfect or a past tense form. In the latter case—e.g. if *My grandfather's name was John* is reported as *She said that her grandfather's name had been John*—the past perfect is used without there being any question of a resultative state. This is disastrous to Wada's analysis of *have*, which claims that the "event time" of *have* is the time when the resultative state obtains. If a past perfect in IRS is the "backshifted" version of a past tense form, which does not involve *have* and does not imply a resultative state, then we have a tense (viz. the past perfect) which involves a form of *have* without an "event time," i.e. without a time when the resultative state obtains. (This is

all right in my theory, where *have* just expresses anteriority, but demolishes one of the corner-stones of Wada's, viz. the claim that *have* is a main verb with an event time.)

4.5. Auxiliaries as Main Verbs

There are several problems with Wada's claim that auxiliaries are main verbs. This claim is essential to Wada's theory, but it is a very dubious claim. As is well-known, auxiliaries differ from main verbs in that they have the NICE-properties,¹⁶ and lack most of the syntactic characteristics and possibilities of main verbs. Wada (1998a: 108) is therefore cautious enough to modify the claim in the following way: "I assume that auxiliary verbs have the same status as main verbs, *at least semantically*" (my emphasis). However, this statement means no more than that auxiliaries like *will* and *have* have a semantic content—something no one will deny. It is a huge step from this to claiming that auxiliaries are main verbs (and therefore have an STO) even though they do not show the morphological and syntactic characteristics of main verbs.

Wada's only piece of evidence for the claim that an auxiliary can "express its own situation" (1998a: 108) is the grammaticality of sentences like *Now you may go skiing tonight* and *We can now leave tomorrow as planned*. However, this argument does not explain why the use of an adverb specifying the "event time" of the auxiliary is ungrammatical in (quite similar) sentences like the following: *(*This morning) you may go skiing tonight*, *(*Today) we can leave tomorrow as planned*, *(*Now) he has recently finished his book*, *(*Now) the treasure must have been hidden somewhere else*, *(*Now) that will be the milkman*. It appears that, as a rule, the "event time" of the situation (allegedly) expressed by a modal auxiliary cannot normally be specified adverbially. The only adverb that can sometimes be found is *now*, which, however, is not used then as a normal time adverb specifying the time of the situation but is equivalent to "now it is/was the case that ..."—see Banfield (1982: 158), Vet (1984: 194), Declerck (1991: 291). This strongly sug-

¹⁶ "NICE-properties" refers to the phenomenon that, unlike main verbs, auxiliaries have no *do*-support in Negative sentences, Interrogative sentences, Code (=use of the verb as pro-form) and Emphatic affirmation.

gests that auxiliaries do not have an “event time” at all, i.e. that a modality or a temporal relation expressed by a verb form is not a situation of the type that is expressed by main verbs. This is not to say that temporal auxiliaries do not imply a time when the situation that is being related to another TO holds true: in *He has arrived*, the situation of having arrived is true at any time between the arrival and t_0 , and will continue to be true in the future; in *Yesterday he would leave as soon as possible*, the time when it was true that he would leave is indicated by *yesterday*. However, t_0 and yesterday are “times of evaluation,” not event times. (As a matter of fact, it seems to me that Wada says the same thing in the following passage:

A viewpoint is defined as an *evaluation pivot* from which one evaluates or calculates something linguistic or non-linguistic. As far as time reference is concerned, a viewpoint corresponds to a time of orientation, i.e. a base time from which a given event time is computed. (1998b: 180)

In *Yesterday he would leave as soon as possible*, the adverb *yesterday* certainly specifies the time functioning as “viewpoint” and hence as the “base time” for *would*. So this time is an “evaluation pivot,” but not an event time.)

Another problem concerns the identification of the “event time” of *will* and *have*. Wada repeatedly states that the “event time” of *will* is the time when the speaker forms the mental idea of prediction (i.e. “the time when the speaker’s prediction holds true” (1998a: 131)), while the “event time” of *have* is the time when the “resultative state” obtains. However, this analysis of future tense *will* in terms of prediction (which is asserted at various points in Wada (1998a)) runs counter to another passage, in which Wada points out that “readers should distinguish the future use of *will* from the epistemic use of *will* representing a present prediction, as shown in *Rieko will be at home now*” (1998a: 140). As to the claim that the “event time” of *have* is the time when the “resultative state” obtains, this claim runs counter to the following remark, which is made in connection with *Mary said that Nancy had gone to Italy* (1998b: 184):

In our analysis, whether the reference time of *had gone* is simultaneous with, or comes before, the time of *said* is irrelevant when we use the pluperfect; for at the tense-structure level, the pluperfect itself establishes the past time-sphere and *represents its event time as coming before its reference time in that time-*

sphere. At the tense-interpretation level, which interpretation we choose is determined by the context. (my emphasis)

However, if the "event time" of *have* is the time when the resultative state obtains, then *have* represents its reference time (to which the time of the going is related) as anterior to its "event time." This runs counter to the above passage, where it is claimed that the past perfect "represents its event time as coming before its reference time."

The idea that one of the two TOs involved in the relationship expressed by *will* and *have* is an "event time" may be inspired by the fact that the temporal relation is by definition a unidirectional one: *have* expresses "TO anterior to binding TO" and *will* expresses "TO posterior to binding TO," not vice versa (see Declerck (1995: 9–10)). However, this does not make the binding TO an event time, for there are many cases in which the binding TO is an "implicit TO." This is the case in adverbial *when*-clauses (see Declerck (1996, 1997a)) and in adverbial time clauses introduced by *after*, *before*, *until*, etc. (see Declerck (1991: 971–113, 1994, 1995: 23–24, 1999b)). It is also the case in the future perfect and the conditional perfect, where the binding TO of *have* is an implicit TO, as well as in the past perfect form *He had left early that morning* when this sentence is used out of context (e.g. as the opening sentence of a novel).

It is also significant that Wada himself erodes his claim that *will* is a main verb denoting a situation with an "event time" when he introduces the notion of "orientational event time":

This type of event time is associated with a semantically-unfilled situation and functions merely as a base time (which also functions as a time of orientation at the tense-interpretation level).

To clarify what an orientational event time is, consider (51):

- (51) a. Tomorrow will be Sunday. (Hornby (1975: 95))
 - b. My babe-in-arms will be 59 on my 89th birthday.
- (Palmer (1988: 148))

In section 4.2.1, it has been argued that *will* describes a speaker's mental state, i.e. prediction, but it is hard to think of the *wills* in (51) as describing a speaker's prediction. Take (51a) as a sample case. If it is uttered on Saturday, it is normally nonsense for the speaker to make a prediction about the situation described in (51a) because it is calculated automatically and objectively that the next day is certainly Sunday. The same applies to (51b). In this sense, the *wills* in (51) do not describe

any semantically-filled situation. (1998a: 131)

I must say that it is totally opaque to me what an “unfilled situation” is. Wada’s own definition of “situation” is that it “is a cover term for an action, event, state of affairs, process, whatever described by a predicate” (1998a: 138). I fail to see how this definition leaves room for “semantically-unfilled situations.” The latter idea also runs counter to the very definition of “main verb”: a main verb (= lexical verb) is a verb with a lexical content, i.e. a “semantically-filled” verb. Moreover, I do not understand how a “semantically-unfilled” verb can have an “event time,” as Wada claims. Furthermore, Wada’s own statement that “this type of event time (...) functions merely as a base time” (where “base time” has been defined as equivalent to my “binding TO”)¹⁷ comes down to saying that *will* denotes no more than posteriority to a binding TO, as in my theory.

It should also be noted that the claim that *will* is not a future tense marker but a main verb, hence that there is no future tense in English, cannot be generalized to languages like French or Latin, where the future tense is marked morphologically (by a suffix). This means that, notionally speaking, there is no reason to assume that there cannot be something like a future tense. The only argument left is then that the future tense is not marked morphologically in English. However, this argument has already been refuted in Declerck (1991: 9–10). (The key argument there was that in some languages a morphological indication of tense has developed out of an auxiliary. The modern French future tense suffix is a case in point: Latin originally had a synthetic future (e.g. *cantabo* — “I will sing”); later on this was replaced by the “periphrastic or analytic structure *cantare habeo*, which itself ultimately agglutinated and evolved into the actual Romance synthetic—or, as they are often called, ‘simple’—futures *chanterai*, *cantaré*, *canteró*, etc.” (Fleischman 1982: 1). The French present perfect (*j’ai chanté* has similarly originated as a periphrastic VP which adopted the function of marking perfect, but unlike the future, it has not been subject to re-synthesis but has remained analytic. This example from French shows that whether or not a tense is morphologically marked is the result of a

¹⁷ More correctly, Wada’s “base time” is my “binding TO” in connection with (my) relative tenses and t_0 in connection with (my) absolute tenses.

historical development determined by arbitrary factors that have nothing to do with the essence of the phenomenon of tense itself. In this context we can also refer to Lyons' (1977: 678) remark that "semantically (...) tense is a category of the sentence" and that "the view that tense is necessarily an inflectional category of the verb" is therefore incorrect.)

4.6. Further Dubious Claims

To conclude this critical evaluation, there are several other aspects of Wada's tense theory that I disagree with but which I have not mentioned so far because they do not form part of the basics of his theory. For lack of place, I cannot go into all of them. I will restrict myself to giving a few examples. For instance, Wada's claim that the gerund "expresses non-posteriority, i.e. simultaneity or anteriority" (1998b: 174) is disproved by the empirical fact that after quite a few verbs (e.g. *intend*, *anticipate*, *postpone*, *defer*, *prescribe*, *foresee*, *put off*, *foreshadow*, *suggest* ...) the situation of the gerund is posterior to that of the MC-verb (= verb of the main clause). There is also a problem with Wada's claim that "the semantic structure of the bare infinitive represents a temporal relationship of non-anteriority, i.e. the area consisting of both simultaneity and posteriority" (1998a: 114). Since the semantics of *will* has been defined as "TO posterior to event time (= time when the prediction holds, i.e. t_0)," this claim leads to the conclusion that *She will die* is ambiguous, because the event time of *die* may be either simultaneous with or posterior to the posterior TO in the semantics of *will*. However, there is no ambiguity: the latter reading is simply not available.

Another illustration of a dubious claim concerns the example *Mana said that she practised the koto in earnest for the concert when she was alone*. According to Wada, "the bounded nature of *practised the koto in earnest for the concert*, together with the nature of the assertion, allows [this sentence] to receive only the anterior reading" (1998b: 189). The truth is that the unmarked interpretation of *practised the koto* is that it refers to a habit, i.e. to a state: Comrie (1976) defines a habit as something that is characteristic of the referent of the subject NP over an extended period of time. In this reading, *practised the koto* is not bounded and the sentence does allow the simultaneous reading ("Mana said she was in the habit of practising the koto when she was alone").

There are several other claims that I do not accept (e.g. Wada's (1998b: 174) treatment of *when*), but lack of space forbids discussing them here.

5. Indirect Reported Speech

As noted in the introduction, IRS is a test case for any theory of tense. It has been for mine—see Declerck (1990, 1991: 157–192, 1999a), and Wada (1998b) too considers it a touchstone for his theory. For lack of space, I cannot go into the two analyses in detail here. In a nutshell, they are as follows. My view is that the unmarked use of tense in the CC (=complement clause) of an IRS sentence is the use of a relative tense incorporating the STO of the CC into the temporal domain established by the verb of reporting, as in *John said he would be here tomorrow*. However, there is also the marked option of a “shift of domain”: under certain conditions the CC can use an absolute tense to establish a domain of its own, as in *John said he will be here tomorrow*.¹⁸ According to Wada, the CC uses an absolute past tense, but in the CC “the reporter as public self can change [the tense] on his or her own responsibility” (1998b: 188).

In what follows I will discuss some (sets of) data which are naturally accounted for in my theory but which I think Wada's theory cannot handle. The first data is illustrated by the following:

- (5) a. If it { rains/*will rain } tomorrow, the game will be cancelled.
- b. He said that he would help her mother when she { was/*would be } in trouble.
- c. I said I would do it when I { was/*would be } back home.

Wada (1988b: 189) admits that, since “both *would be* and *was* in the WCs [= *when*-clauses] of (5b–c) contain the past time-sphere in their tense structures,” the ungrammaticality of *would be* is not naturally explained by his tense theory. He therefore suggests a special solution, which is based on modal logic. He first points out (correctly) that *if*-

¹⁸ Wada (1998b: 167) disregards this second possibility and therefore misrepresents my analysis when he calls it a “relative time analysis.”

clauses create an “intensional domain,” and that WCs do the same. He then claims that the intensional domain in question is “objective”—in Wada (1998a: 112) he speaks of an “objective realm”—in the sense that the relations expressed in it are purely temporal relations. Because of this, “there is (...) no room for subjective elements like modality to enter into the SC situations” (1998b: 190). In his opinion, this explains why we can use *rains* in (5a) and *was* in (5b–c) but not *will rain* and *would be*: the former verb forms are “neutral as to modality,” while the latter are modal forms, which therefore “cannot enter into situations like those in *if*-clauses and TCs [= time clauses] which constitute part of intensional domains” (1998b: 190).

This explanation raises several problems. Firstly, it runs counter to the well-known fact that *will* and epistemic auxiliaries are impeccable in *if*-clauses that are interpreted as expressing a “closed condition” (i.e. a condition which is assumed to be true—see Declerck (1991: 198–222)). Thus there is nothing wrong with *If (as I believe) the river { will/may/could } rise as high as this, these cattle are in danger of being drowned*. (Note that, since a closed condition expresses an assumption, it also creates an intensional domain.) Secondly, it is not clear to me how an intensional domain can be an “objective realm” (1998a: 112). Is it not part of the very definition of “intensional domain” that the clauses in it are interpreted “opaquely” rather than “transparently”? I associate “objective” with “transparent” rather than with “opaque.” Thirdly, Wada’s claim that modal auxiliaries cannot be used in *if*-clauses and WCs is simply falsified by examples like the following:

- (6) a. I would be surprised if the project *were to* go through.
 b. If anyone *should* come, my wife will tell them I am not at home.
 c. Especially I made strong deep baskets to place my corn in, instead of sacks, when I *should* come to have any quantity of it. (Defoe 1906: 80)

Fourthly, if the correct explanation of the English data were to be found in modal logic, then the data would have to be the same in other languages, because modal logic applies independently of a particular language. However, using the conditional tense in the (translations of the) WCs of (6a–b) is quite grammatical in many European languages (e.g. French), including Germanic languages like Dutch and German, which are cognate with English.

My conclusion is that Wada’s theory cannot account for the ungram-

maticality of *will* and *would* in (6a-c). My theory, on the other hand, can easily do so, as is demonstrated in Declerck (1991: 62-64), and especially in Declerck & Depraetere (1995).

A second problem for Wada's account of tense in IRS is that it does not explain why "sequence of tenses" is the unmarked option, i.e. the option which is always available and never leads to unacceptability. Consider the following:

- (7) a. (I thought you were the boss.)—I was the boss, but now it's Peter.
 b. He told me that he { had been/ ?*was } the boss, but that it now was Peter.

There is absolutely nothing in Wada's theory that explains the virtual unacceptability of *was* in (7b).¹⁹ (Note that *had been* does not express a resultative state here; so this aspect of meaning cannot be the reason for its use.)

There is a similar problem in connection with examples like *Bruce said that Mary was pregnant*. Wada (1998b: 182) points out that in this sentence "the preterite in the CC can receive either a deictic or non-deictic interpretation," and that these are triggered by the addition of suitable adverbials like *a year ago* (=deictic interpretation) or *the year before* (= non-deictic interpretation). However, Wada ignores what seems to me to be the unmarked reading of the sentence, i.e., that Mary's pregnancy is represented as simultaneous with Bruce's saying. This is an interpretation which is neither deictic nor non-deictic in Wada's sense: it is the interpretation which comes about when we analyse *was* as a relative tense expressing simultaneity in the past domain established by *said*.

Another problem is that Wada's analysis is actually a kind of "absolute deixis hypothesis" (Comrie (1986)), because it holds that CCs in IRS make use of absolute tense forms. This means that it is falsified by at least some of the arguments which Comrie (1986) adduces against this hypothesis. For example:

- (8) a. In 2020, Ebenezer will say, "I got tenure in 2010."

¹⁹ What I am arguing here is only true under neutral sentence intonation. As pointed out by one of the referees, placing a heavy accent on it renders *was* in (7b) impeccable. This is because this accent conveys an explicit contrast between the past and the present.

- b. In 2020, Ebenezer will say that he { got/*will get } tenure in 2010.

Since the year 2010 is future with respect to t_0 , the absolute deixis hypothesis predicts that in (8b) *will get* should be correct and *got* incorrect. Actually, it is the other way round. Wada (1998b: 191) accounts for the grammaticality of *got* by introducing the following principle:

In English indirect speech, the viewpoint of the public self *can* be shifted from S to the MC time when the MC time is in the future. (1998b: 191) (my emphasis)

However, this only explains why *got* CAN be used in (8b), not why it MUST be used (i.e. why the version with *will get* is not an acceptable report of (8a)). Moreover, this rule is represented as applying to IRS only, so that Wada's analysis is incapable of explaining analogous uses of past tenses in other types of subordinate clauses:

- (9) a. A person who *registered* as late as tomorrow will still be eligible to vote on Tuesday. (Harris (1982: 266))
 b. Repeat (5). Then repeat (1-4). The plug will be wetter than [it was] when you *started* by now. (LOB)

It should also be noted that the formulation "can be shifted" in Wada's above principle is not a slip of the tongue. Wada (1998b: 191) puts it even more clearly: "At the tense-interpretation level, *under certain conditions* the base time to which the past time-sphere is related *can be shifted* from S to a future time" (my emphasis). This formulation also reveals why Wada states his principle in such a tentative way: because of his very narrow definition of "tense structure" he is obliged to claim that his principle works "at the tense-interpretation level." However, this claim is tenable only if the shift is optional. If it is obligatory, then it is an inherent ingredient of the English tense system itself, i.e. it must work at the tense-structure level. This is incompatible with Wada's theory, but actually in keeping with the linguistic facts. A detailed investigation of the phenomenon in Declerck and Depraetere (1995) reveals that the "shift" in question (which gives rise to the "Present Perspective System") does apply obligatorily in IRS *that*-clauses.

Another problem for Wada's absolute deixis hypothesis concerns the following:

- (10) a. They will report [tomorrow], "Harry is transmitting [today]."
 b. They will report that Harry { was/is } transmitting.

Wada can account for the use of *was* (but not *is*) by means of his above principle. For the grammaticality of *is* he offers the following explanation: "at the tense-structure level, both *will* and *is transmitting* establish the present time-sphere in which their event times are located. At the tense-interpretation level, the event time of *is transmitting* is connected with S, but not the time of reporting, because of the context" (1998b: 184). However, it is not clear to me what the relevant context could be when (10b) is used in isolation. Moreover, Wada wrongly assumes that *is transmitting* can only refer to t_0 . Actually, its unmarked interpretation is that the transmitting will be going on at the time of the future report. (My explanation for this is that the present tense is the tense used as relative tense expressing simultaneity with the central TO of a post-present domain. It is not clear to me how Wada, who rejects the idea of a relative tense, would account for this reading.)

The other sets of data in connection with IRS which I would like to discuss come from Wada (1998b: 170–172) himself. Wada rejects my tense theory on the basis of two arguments. The first is that (in his opinion) I cannot explain why sentences like *John said that he wrote a book* yields the reading in which the STO of the *that*-clause is anterior to the STO of the MC (=main clause), but not the reading in which the STO of the *that*-clause is posterior to the STO of the MC. The latter reading requires *John said that he would write a book*. Wada's (1998b: 182–183) own explanation for this is as follows:

[In IRS] modality in the CC is attributed to the private self. In order to assert something, normally it is already known at the time when the assertion is made. In other words, we can usually make an assertion only about a situation which coincides with, or is prior to, the time of assertion. Given this, it follows that the private self can make an assertion about the CC situation only when the CC time coincides with, or comes before, the MC time. Since the CC predicates in *Mary said that she was pregnant* and *Mary said that she finished her homework* are in the assertive form, both sentences do not allow the posterior reading.

Contrary to what Wada claims, my theory does offer an explanation for the above data (see e.g. Declerck (1991: 184)). I have repeatedly argued that in *John said he wrote a book* both past tense forms estab-

lish a past domain of their own,²⁰ and that the anteriority reading is a question of pragmatic interpretation. The fact that there cannot be a posteriority reading is due to the fact that an expectation concerning the future cannot be truthfully reported as a past fact.²¹ (Whenever a preterite form establishes a past domain, the speaker represents its situation as a past fact. That is why the anteriority reading (which is factual) presents no problem. However, representing the original speaker's expectation or prediction as a past fact (from the reporter's point of view) violates the general rule (based on the Gricean Maxim of Quality) that a reliable report of an utterance must do justice to the meaning of that utterance—see also Declerck (1999a: 85–87).) So, Wada is wrong in claiming that I cannot account for the observed data. Moreover, although Wada's explanation may look very similar to mine, I think it is actually mistaken. While I claim that the explanation is that an expectation concerning the future cannot be (truthfully) reported as a past fact, Wada claims that you cannot replace predictive modality by assertive modality. However, he himself disproves the latter claim when he adduces the following explanation for the fact that *Emily is leaving next Thursday* is grammatical: "At S the speaker is certain of Emily's leaving next Thursday. He or she can thus assert the actuality of the [future] situation at issue" (1998b: 188). So, predictive modality can (sometimes) be replaced with assertive modality after all. However, it is not possible to (truthfully) report an expectation concerning the future as a past fact, because this comes down to an unwarranted change of viewpoint: what is expected by the original speaker is not a fact from his point of view. Representing it as a fact

²⁰ As explained in Declerck (1995: 25–27) and Declerck (1999a: 104–105), a bounded *that*-clauses in IRS can never yield a simultaneity reading, i.e. its past tense can never be a relative past tense.

²¹ This explanation accords with what Heny (1982: 126) argues in connection with the example *Sam believed that he {would be/*was} in Boston [the next day]*. According to Heny, the use of the preterite is excluded in such sentences because "the object of belief must be relativized to the same time as the belief sentence itself or to some interval intersecting with that time. (...) It would clearly do violence to the fact that Sam's belief was about the future—a future relative to that past time at which it was held—if we used the deictic past to fix the evaluation of the embedded proposition, rather than the available *would*." In other words: "a report about an attitude must not do violence to the structure of the attitude in question" (ibid).

means that the reporter imposes his own viewpoint and in doing so changes the meaning from hypothetical to factual. As Wada (1998b: 179) himself points out, an IRS-statement is an acceptable (truthful) report only if “the reporter preserves what the original speaker intends to convey”—see also Coulmas (1986: 2–3).

The second argument which Wada adduces against my analysis is that it “cannot explain the ungrammaticality of” the following:

- (11) a. Rieko said that she would leave when I *arrived* tomorrow.
- b. John expected that he would be there when I *arrived* tomorrow.

However, every one of the (British) informants I have consulted considers these sentences as grammatical, and similar sentences have been treated as grammatical by Harris (1982: 266), Abusch (1988: 2) and Salkie and Reed (1997). It is true that the juxtaposition of a past tense and an adverb that has future time reference as part of its meaning (viz. *tomorrow*) might sound awkward, and that some speakers might consider sentences like (11a–b) as unacceptable because of this. However, the awkwardness of this juxtaposition is merely a superficial collocation restriction, as has been pointed out by Comrie (1986: 288) in connection with sentences like *The day after tomorrow, Bill will admit that he left {the day before/?tomorrow}*. I myself have subscribed to this solution in Declerck (1991: 168–169). The conclusion must be that, contrary to what is claimed by Wada, the past tense in the WCs of examples like (11a–b) is quite grammatical but may perhaps be relatively unacceptable to some speakers because of this collocation restriction. However, such sentences are perfectly acceptable to every native speaker if the juxtaposition of a preterite form and a future time adverb is avoided. In Declerck (1985: 15) I have illustrated this with the following piece of discourse:

- (12) The last time I saw him he told us about what he planned to do. When he *was* fifty-five he would retire. He would then undergo some kind of surgical operation. When he *was* sixty, he would have his autobiography written by a journalist. But he would have the world believe that he had written it himself when he *was* in hospital.

In this passage, all three *was* forms refer to a situation that follows t_0 , exactly as *arrived* does in (11a–b). This time there is no doubt whatever about the acceptability of these sentences, because there is no jux-

taposition problem. The same is true of the following:

- (13) a. Just now the U.S. announced that they would veto any decision about Iraq that *was taken* by the Security Council.
- b. Yesterday John promised that he would come over from South Africa next week if his presence here *was* really required (then).
- c. John decided a week ago that in ten days at breakfast he would say to his mother that they *were having* their last meal together. (Abusch (1988: 2))

To my knowledge, my theory is the only comprehensive theory of tense that can explain the grammaticality of the past tense (with reference to the post-present) in examples like (11)–(13). In (13c) *decided* is an absolute preterite establishing a past domain. The form *would say* relates its STO as posterior to this central TO. Since *would say* does not relate its STO to t_0 , it is possible for this STO to be interpreted as actually following t_0 . (This does not alter the fact that the domain is a past domain. Any domain whose central TO is located in the past time-sphere is a past domain.) The form *were having* is a relative past tense form relating its STO as simultaneous to the STO of *would say*. (Remember that in a past domain we always use the past tense for simultaneity, irrespective of the location of the binding TO in the domain.) The fact that the STO of *would say* is interpreted as following t_0 is immaterial to this; both the STO of *would say* and that of *were having* belong to a past domain, and the past tense is the only way of expressing simultaneity in a past domain.

It should be clear now that the grammaticality of examples like (11)–(13) falsify Wada's tense theory. According to him, it is part of the semantics of the preterite that this tense establishes the past time-sphere. Wada also (correctly) assumes that in IRS the past time-sphere precedes t_0 , except in examples like *In 2010, Ebenezer will say that he got tenure in 2000*, where the viewpoint of the public self (=the reporting speaker) is shifted to the future MC time (Wada 1998b: 191). This means that in nonexceptional cases like (11)–(13) it should be impossible to use the past tense to refer to a situation which actually follows t_0 . Wada himself uses this argument to explain the alleged ungrammaticality of (11a): "In the proposed tense theory, the finite predicate *arrived* in the WC has the A-component establishing the past time-sphere, so that the time of arriving must happen in the past. Thus the

co-occurrence of *arrived* with the future time adverb *tomorrow* results in a contradiction" (1998b: 183). However, this argument is falsified by the linguistic facts. There is no contradiction between *arrived* and *tomorrow* in (11a). The ugly fact is that (11)–(13) are perfectly grammatical and that Wada's tense theory is disproved because of this.

It should also be noted that Wada's theory is not only incapable of explaining the grammaticality of the relevant past tense forms in (11)–(13) but also wrongly predicts the grammaticality of the "present tense form" *will* in the same sentences:

(11) a'. Rieko said that she would leave when I { *?arrived*/**will arrive* } tomorrow.

(13) c'. John decided a week ago that in ten days at breakfast he would say to his mother that they { *were having*/**will be having* } their last meal together.

Since the arrival and the breakfast are understood as taking place in the future of t_0 , Wada's theory predicts that it should be possible to refer to them by means of *will*, which is a "present tense." However, this prediction is not borne out by the facts.

6. Conclusion

In this article I have defended my own theory of tense against the alternative proposed by Wada (1998a, 1998b). I have pointed out a large number of problems for Wada's theory, some of which (e.g. the ones pertaining to IRS) seem to me to be insurmountable. The main conclusion from the discussion is that we need a model of the English tense system which hinges on the notion of "temporal domain," established by an absolute (or absolute-relative, e.g. future perfect) tense and expanded by (purely) relative tenses. One of those relative tenses is the relative past tense, whose meaning is "STO simultaneous with binding TO in a past (or 'pseudo-past'—see Declerck and Depraetere (1995)) domain." Given this conclusion, I find it regrettable that Wada ignores all the arguments in favour of the existence of temporal domains and of relative past tense forms that are adduced in Declerck (1995).

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SOURCE OF EXAMPLES

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