

## On the Relation between Expletive *There* and Its Associate: A Reply to Williams

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The relation between expletive *there* and its associate involves agreement, as suggested in Hazout 2004, and not  $\theta$ -role assignment, as suggested in Williams 1994, 2006. This difference reflects radically different assumptions about the nature of the subject-predicate relation. The analysis in Hazout 2004 provides a superior account of the empirical facts and affords insights that are missed by the account in Williams 1994.

*Keywords:* expletive *there*, existential constructions, adjunct predicates, main predicates, subject-predicate relation

Williams (2006:648) claims that the theory of existential *there*-sentences presented in Hazout 2004 is “no different in intent or substance from that presented in Williams 1994:134–137. . . . Hazout apparently fails to realize that his account replicates not only the proposal made in Williams 1994 but also its role in explaining the principal features of the existential *there*-construction.” Claiming that “the identity of the two proposals is not a superficial one based on shared terminology,” Williams suggests that “Hazout’s proposal operates identically to mine in deriving explanations for the facts about existential sentences.”

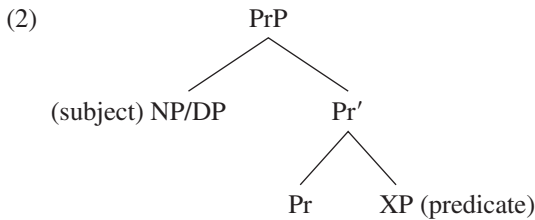
Contrary to these claims, in this reply I show that, although the two accounts share certain insights that are due originally to Williams (1994), they differ substantially in their theoretical assumptions as well as in their account of the empirical facts. Replying to Williams’s (2006) claims provides me with the opportunity not only to acknowledge my indebtedness to his original work (as I also did in Hazout 2004), but also to clarify and sharpen the differences between the two proposals. The account in Hazout 2004 differs substantially and significantly from that in Williams 1994 since it involves different theoretical assumptions that afford an explanation of the facts superior to that achieved in Williams 1994, and make possible certain insights not available within Williams’s approach.

As Williams observes, one major issue in this discussion concerns the understanding and “implementation” of the subject-predicate relation. He suggests that “Hazout’s implementation of the subject-predicate relation is trivially different from that found in Williams 1994” (p. 648). However, the two accounts are not “trivially different” in this regard and, as I will show, his suggestion that (1) is “the principle that underlies both analyses, and drives all the explanations in both accounts” is only partially true.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Williams (2006:648) cites the following statement as “Hazout’s (2004[:394–395]) version of (1)”: “This NP is a predicate with respect to its thematic status as well as its syntactic positioning and function.” However, as Williams does not point out, this statement is made explicitly with respect to the existential sentence in (i) ((1) in Hazout 2004).

- (1) The expletive and its associate instantiate the subject-predicate relation.  
(Williams 2006:648, (1))

For the sake of clarifying the issues, let me briefly present the assumptions I make in Hazout 2004 regarding the subject-predicate relation and the syntax of predication. There, I adopt a proposal originally made by Bowers (1993, 2001), who postulates the existence of the functional element *Pr* (a mnemonic for *Predication*), which figures as the head of PrP in a structure like (2).



NP/DP and XP in (2) are construed as subject and predicate by virtue of occupying the specifier and complement positions in this configuration, respectively. In standard cases that involve assignment of an external (subject)  $\theta$ -role, that role is assigned to the NP/DP specifier of Pr. In the cases relevant for this discussion, a PrP figures as the complement of I/T or, in instances of nonverbal predication, as the complement of the copular verb *be* (or *haya* 'be' in the corresponding Hebrew structures discussed in Hazout 2004).<sup>2</sup> Crucial to this approach, as it is understood and employed in Hazout 2004, is the view that XP in (2) is identified as, and assigned the status of, predicate by virtue of occupying the complement position in this configuration. In particular, XP's status as predicate is not derived from any semantic/thematic relation it may have with the subject. Indeed, one of the main claims made in Hazout 2004, which distinguishes the approach taken there from the one taken in Williams 1994, is that an existential sentence like (3) involves an NP predicate (i.e., the XP of (2)) and no  $\theta$ -role assignment to the subject.

- (3) There is a problem.

Another suggestion made in Hazout 2004 is that an NP located within the predicate/complement

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It is clear from the discussion in Hazout 2004 that this statement does not apply to sentences like (ii), whose analysis is crucial for this discussion.

- (i) There are [people for whom dignity is important].  
(ii) There arrived a man from New York.

Thus, although in the particular case of (i) the subject is the semantically empty *there*, the postcopular NP in (i) not only occupies the position of a predicate (unlike the associate in (ii), as demonstrated below)—it is also thematically a predicate in that it could, in principle, be related as predicate to a referential subject (e.g., *John and Mary are people for whom dignity is important*). This crucial aspect of the analysis in Hazout 2004 is not taken into account in Williams 2006. See also footnote 5 and the discussion of (19)–(22) below.

<sup>2</sup> Bowers (1993) suggests that a PrP also occurs as the complement of verbs like *consider* in sentences like *John considers [Mary intelligent]*, thus figuring as what has traditionally been analyzed as a small clause. This part of Bowers's (1993) proposal is irrelevant for the present discussion.

of a PrP can be grammatically licensed by having its agreement features assigned upward to Pr'. This option of grammatical licensing is available to an NP located within this part of the structure as an alternative to the standard strategy of grammatical licensing by Case assignment/checking. In cases where this alternative strategy is used, an agreement relation is established between Pr' and its sister, the subject. In this way, an agreement relation can be (indirectly) established between the subject and an NP located within the predicate side of Pr.

Williams (2006:648) claims that ‘‘Hazout’s implementation of the subject-predicate relation is trivially different from that found in Williams 1994. The former involves feature percolation . . . whereas the latter uses index percolation.’’ However, in the analysis proposed in Hazout 2004, (agreement) feature percolation is not an implementation of the subject-predicate relation. Rather, what implements this relation is the respective configurational positioning of NP/DP and some XP (predicate) within a PrP of the kind shown in (2). Thus, an XP can figure as predicate (i.e., be the complement of Pr) without there being any upward percolation of agreement features (which the XP may not be specified for). This is trivially so in cases involving a subject-predicate relation (and external  $\theta$ -role assignment) with a verbal predicate (i.e., VP as complement of Pr) that has no specification for agreement features to be projected upward to Pr' (e.g., *John left*).

This lack of correlation between an XP's having the status of (sentential) predicate and having its agreement features projected upward to Pr' goes in the opposite direction as well. That is, an NP may project its agreement features to Pr', and be grammatically licensed in this way, without being a predicate in the simple structural sense suggested above. This situation may arise when an NP is contained within a predicate (i.e., the XP complement of Pr) and has the option of being grammatically licensed by projecting its agreement features to Pr' (e.g., if accusative Case assignment/checking cannot take place). Within the analysis proposed in Hazout 2004, (4) is a case of this kind.

(4) There seems to have arrived a man from New York.

Under this analysis, *a man* in (4) is an internal argument of *arrive*, located within the VP headed by this verb. This VP occupies the position of XP in a configuration like (2). What I suggest regarding *a man* in this sentence is that ‘‘it acts as a predicate nominal for the purpose of a subject-predicate agreement relation . . . and it is otherwise configurationally situated in a way characteristic of predicate nominals’’ (p. 417). This means that *a man* in this case is located within the predicate part of a PrP and can therefore have its agreement features propagated upward to Pr' in the manner of a predicate nominal. An agreement relation with the (underspecified) subject *there* can consequently be established. The relation between *there* (which serves as a mediator for the purpose of long-distance agreement with the matrix verb) and its associate in (4) thus involves agreement but no  $\theta$ -role assignment. The associate NP in (4) does not have the status of a predicate since it is not the complement of Pr but rather is contained within the complement.

As is clear from the discussion in Williams 2006, the analysis of sentences like (4) and the status of the associate in such sentences is an issue on which the two accounts differ sharply. Obviously, at least within the analysis defended here and advocated in Hazout 2004, a relation

of  $\theta$ -role assignment between the associate and *there* could not possibly be established given the status of this NP as an internal argument. Therefore, within this analysis the choice of agreement features for establishing the relation between *there* and its associate is not equivalent to the choice of  $\theta$ -role assignment and could not be replaced by it while keeping everything else in the analysis as it is. The view that the *there*-associate relation involves  $\theta$ -role assignment necessarily implies a different analysis of sentences like (4). Thus, contrary to Williams's claim that "Hazout's proposal operates identically to [his] in deriving explanations for the facts about existential sentences" (p. 648), I claim that the two accounts differ radically in their ability to account for sentences like (4). Moreover, these differences can be shown to have important, more general consequences.

Williams considers the pair of examples (5a–b), which he takes to be more "informative" than examples like (4).

- (5) a. There came into the room a man.  
 b. \*There came a man into the room.  
 (Williams 2006:649)

According to Williams, the contrast in grammaticality between (5a) and (5b) "shows that the indefinite associate is not in the VP, but in an adjunct position" (p. 649). He claims, moreover, that this view is supported by a parallelism between (5a) and (6), which "shows how that position is used for ordinary adjunct predication of the subject."

- (6) John arrived a fool (but left a wise man).

An examination of this claim must take into account the meaning relationship between (5a) and (7)—in particular, the fact that *a man* in both sentences is understood as an argument of *came*.

- (7) A man came into the room.

The question is how *a man* can be interpreted the same way if it has a different grammatical status (subject vs. adjunct predicate) in the two sentences. The answer within Williams's account seems clear: relying crucially on his view of (5a) as parallel to (6) and his suggestion that "*there* binds the open variable that makes the predicative NP a predicate, thereby satisfying the  $\theta$ -Criterion" (p. 650), we get the desired result regarding the incorporation of *a man* into the meaning of this sentence. Specifically, since *there* in (5a) binds the open variable (i.e.,  $\theta$ -role) of the adjunct predicate *a man*, the interpretation of this NP as subject of *came* follows from the fact that *there* also binds the (external)  $\theta$ -role of this verb. Presumably, exactly the same system of thematic dependencies holds in (6) and, according to this claim, the fact that this is possible in (6) shows that it is also possible in (5a).

As Williams (2006:650) points out, in Williams 1994 he raises "but do[es] not answer" the question of what it means for the nonreferential *there* to be the subject of the predicative NP. He now (2006) suggests that the function of *there* in (5a) is similar to that of *John* in (6), at least in that it "binds," and in this way satisfies, the  $\theta$ -role (or "open variable") of a predicate. At this point, we must ask to what extent *there* is free to act in this way with respect to different kinds

of predicates. Clearly, *John* in (6) can satisfy not only the  $\theta$ -role of the adjunct predicate *a fool*, but also that of the main verb *arrive*. Given his suggestion of a parallelism between (5a) and (6), Williams must be claiming that *there* in (5a) acts in the same way (however, see footnote 6 below). Note now that one thing that follows from *a fool*'s adjunct-predicate status in (6) is the simple fact that it can be dropped, yet the resulting sentence remains grammatical.

(8) John arrived.

If (5a) is to be regarded as parallel to (6), we should expect the same to be possible with *a man* in this example; but it is not.

(9) \*There came into the room.

Presumably, the ungrammaticality of (9) can be explained not only as resulting from the absence of an argument required by *come*, but also (or alternatively) as due to the well-known requirement that *there* cooccur with an associate NP (however this requirement may be formally expressed within the approach taken in Williams 1994). This requirement is not satisfied in (9). However, note that, besides being dropped, an adjunct predicate related to a subject can precede it.

(10) A fool, John never arrives on time.

Therefore, at least on a view that takes the associate to be an adjunct predicate, it should be possible to satisfy *there*'s need for an associate by having an adjunct predicate located in sentence-initial position.

(11) \*A man, there came into the room.

Clearly, *a man* in (11) does not occur in "the right place" although it *is* in the right place for an adjunct predicate. As I will show later, expletive *there* cannot be related as subject to a (preceding) adjunct predicate even when an additional NP occurs in a position usual for an associate. I thus conclude that Williams's suggested parallelism between (5a) and (6) does not exist. The NP *a man* in (5a) not only is interpreted as an argument but also has the grammatical status and syntactic distribution of an argument. The prediction that (9) or (11) should be grammatical follows directly from the view that the associate in (5a) is an adjunct predicate, and this prediction is clearly wrong.

Note also that, in offering (5a) (his (4a)) as a more "informative" example, Williams (2006) ignores a long-standing observation, due originally to Milsark (1974), regarding the existence in English of two types of *there*-insertion constructions, which Milsark calls "outside verbals" and "inside verbals." While (5a) is an example of the former, (12) is an example of the latter (for relevant discussion, see also Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1995:148–154, from which (12) is borrowed).

(12) There remained three men in the room.

As Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995) point out, the significance of examples like (12) is that, if the PP *in the room* is selected by the verb, then the NP/DP situated to its left must be viewed

as occupying an internal argument position in the VP headed by *remain*. There is, in fact, no need for a full clarification of the status of the PP in such examples in order to appreciate their significance for this discussion. Consider the following raising construction:

(13) There seem to have remained three men in the room.

The point is that, whether one takes the PP *in the room* in (13) to be a selected argument or an adverbial (locative) modifier of *remain*, it cannot be viewed as related in any way to the higher verb *seem*. Rather, it can only be an argument, or an adverbial modifier, of the embedded verb *remain*. It follows that *three men* in (13) must be located inside the embedded VP headed by *remain*. In particular, it cannot possibly occupy a position from which it could be related as adjunct predicate to an NP in the matrix subject position (see also footnote 3).

The difficulty in viewing the relation between *there* and its associate as one of  $\theta$ -role assignment is that, given such a view, analyzing the associate in sentences like (5a) or (12)–(13) as an adjunct is the only option. As suggested earlier, the reason for this is simple: other than being an adjunct predicate, the associate in these sentences can only be an (internal) argument of the verb *came* or *remain*. However (to use Williams's (1989, 1994) terminology), since this NP is an argument, its external (R-)  $\theta$ -role would be "used up" by its thematic relation with the verb and therefore no longer available for a thematic relation with *there*. For such a relation to be established, the associate must be "thematically free," which is only possible if it is an adjunct predicate.<sup>3</sup> Using agreement features instead of thematic indices to implement the relation between *there* and its associate provides a way to overcome this difficulty. To the extent that viewing the associate in (5a) or (12)–(13) as an adjunct is untenable and the only remaining choice is to view it as an argument, and to the extent that some relation between expletive *there* and its associate must be established, the choice of agreement features as a notational device is crucial. I conclude that viewing the associate in (5a) and (12)–(13) as an adjunct is indeed untenable and that the only remaining choice is to take this NP to be an internal argument.<sup>4</sup> It follows that the view that the *there*-associate relation is thematic must be given up as incompatible with such an analysis.

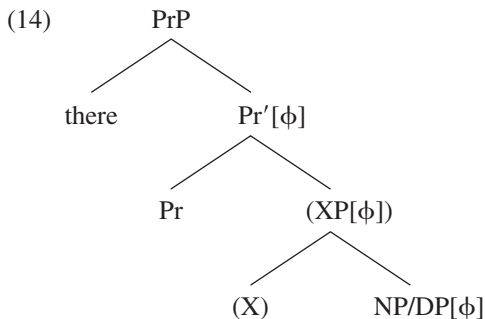
Given this result, we can now see that sentences like (4) and (5a) are cases where the two accounts also differ with regard to the principle in (1). Specifically, in such sentences the expletive and its associate do not instantiate the subject-predicate relation, although an agreement relation does hold between them. Since the analysis of (4) and (5a) that I advocated in Hazout 2004 is the one defended here, I could not, in Hazout 2004, assume the principle in (1) (which Williams (2006) wrongly attributes to my analysis) and remain consistent. Thus, in an approach that takes

<sup>3</sup> Within the version of  $\theta$ -theory developed in Williams 1994, NP-movement, as in raising constructions, is analyzed as the upward propagation of a thematic index from the embedded infinitival VP to the "raised" NP. Thus, on this view there is no stage in the derivation of (13), for example, at which *there* is situated as subject of the embedded infinitive. The fact that existential *there* can occur as the "raised" subject in such sentences, just like a referential NP, represents a major difficulty for this  $\theta$ -theoretic approach to NP-movement unless it can be argued, as in Williams 1994, that the relation between *there* and its associate involves assignment of a  $\theta$ -role.

<sup>4</sup> It follows that something along the lines of Chomsky's (2001) Th/Ex may have to be invoked to account for "outside verbals" such as (5a).

*there* and its associate to be thematically related, (1) must always be true, whereas in the approach advocated in Hazout 2004, this is not necessarily so. This constitutes a considerable difference between the two approaches.<sup>5</sup>

As for the use of agreement ( $\phi$ -) features, the choice of this notational device is crucial as an alternative to thematic indices not only for the purpose of establishing a relation between *there* and its associate—it also makes possible an account of the distribution of expletive *there* and, in particular, of the requirement that the associate be an NP (as opposed to an item from another category, such as *red* in \**There was red*). Given the assumption that nouns are the only category in English specified for agreement features, this requirement is implemented in Hazout 2004 as the requirement that *there* be merged as the sister of a  $\text{Pr}'$  specified for  $\phi$ -features, as shown in (14) (where, typically,  $X = V$ ).



Since both AP and VP, as well as NP/DP, can in principle be thematically related as predicates to a subject, there must be some other basis for the fact that NP/DP is singled out by *there*-insertion constructions.<sup>6</sup>

The choice of agreement features as a notational device is also natural since a major concern in Hazout 2004 is to account for long-distance agreement (an issue not discussed in Williams

<sup>5</sup> Since Williams (2006) is wrong in claiming that the principle in (1) “underlies” the analysis in Hazout 2004 (as it does the analysis in Williams 1994), he is also wrong in claiming that I repeat, “without citation,” “arguments for (1) . . . based on locality and the occurrence of predicate nominals” (p. 648). Clearly, since I do not adopt (1) in Hazout 2004, I could not possibly argue, or “repeat arguments,” in favor of that principle. Moreover, since the relation between *there* and its associate within the analysis in Hazout 2004 is not always a subject-predicate relation, locality restrictions on this relation could not be derived from the locality of the subject-predicate relation. Therefore, to the extent that some locality restrictions apply to this relation (e.g., \**There seems that a man is in the room*), they could not be explained as deriving from locality restrictions imposed on the subject-predicate relation. In Hazout 2004, I suggest an explanation of such restrictions based on the mechanism of ( $\phi$ -) feature inheritance.

<sup>6</sup> On this matter, Williams (1994) has this to say:

[T]he idea that *there* is the subject of the indefinite NP raises a perplexing question: Why must the predicate be an NP? Why could it not, for example, be an AP?

(54) \**There was red.*

(Meaning ‘There was some redness’, or ‘There was something red’, or some such.) I do not have an answer to this question. It is clearly connected with the question of what it means for the nonreferential *there* to be the subject of the predicative NP, and with the existential interpretation of the clause, but I do not understand this. (pp. 136–137)

From observations about the corresponding facts in Hebrew, I conclude in Hazout 2004:403 that the restriction discussed in this quotation “is an idiosyncratic fact about English syntax rather than a phenomenon that reflects any deep general principles of the grammar.”



1994). Clearly, then, Williams's suggestion (p. 649) that I "could have picked any other means of instantiating the [*there*-associate] relation" in Hazout 2004 is unjustified.

As noted earlier and as recognized by Williams (1994), the option of "backward" predication, illustrated in (15a–b), is generally open to adjunct predicates. Also, as (15b) shows, a subject can easily enter an adjunct predication relation with more than one adjunct.

(15) a. Sad, John left.

b. A responsible politician, John never arrives drunk to work.

Given these facts and the parallelism that Williams (1994, 2006) claims to hold between sentences like (5a) and (6), it would seem that the same parallelism should hold between (15b) and (16), the latter being predicted to be grammatical just like (5a).

(16) \*A successful politician, there arrived one of my best friends.

Given Williams's (2006) suggestions, if *there* in (16) can bind the open variable of the adjunct predicate *one of my best friends*, it should be able to entertain the same relationship with the sentence-initial adjunct predicate *a successful politician*. This should be possible in the same way that *drunk* and *a responsible politician* both entertain a  $\theta$ -role assignment relation with *John* in (15b). The most likely explanation for the observed contrast between (15b) and (16) seems to be that *there* in (16) is a dummy, expletive element, unable to satisfy the  $\theta$ -role of a predicate and therefore unable to enter into a thematic subject-predicate relation. If this is the right conclusion to draw from the ungrammaticality of (16), then the relation between expletive *there* and its associate could not be  $\theta$ -role assignment.

However, this conclusion does not yet fully explain the ungrammaticality of (16). That is, even if we admit that *there* is an expletive pronoun that cannot be involved in a thematic relation with a predicate, there *are* cases where this expletive *is* engaged in a subject-predicate (agreement) relation with an NP and where no additional elements are involved. As pointed out in Hazout 2004, cases of this kind are simple existential sentences like (17).

(17) There is a big crisis.

Note also that the only reason for the ungrammaticality of (16) must be related to the occurrence of the sentence-initial NP *a successful politician*. When this NP is eliminated, the result is the perfectly grammatical (18).

(18) There arrived one of my best friends.

In particular, to the extent that expletive *there* indeed requires an associate NP located with respect to it in a particular way, this requirement is satisfied in (16) as well as in (18). That is, again, the ungrammaticality of (16) must have to do with the relation between *there* and the initial adjunct predicate.

The question now is this: if an NP can be engaged in a subject-predicate relation with the dummy pronoun *there* in (17), why can the sentence-initial NP adjunct in (16) (*a successful politician*) not be engaged in the same kind of relation with the subject *there*?



Clearly, given my conclusion regarding the thematic/semantic nature of *there* as an expletive, neither (16) nor (17) involves a thematic relation between *there* and the NP in question. It follows that the contrast between (16) and (17) must have to do with the syntactic position of this NP in each of these cases. Under the analysis in Hazout 2004, in (17) *there* and the associate NP *a big crisis* bear a subject-predicate relation to each other, which in turn gives rise to an agreement relation between them. However, for this to be possible *a big crisis* must be identified, or sanctioned, as a predicate, and this can only be achieved on the basis of its position. In the theory assumed in Hazout 2004, an XP is syntactically identified (or sanctioned) as a predicate by virtue of occupying the complement position in a PrP. Being located in that position, it can be engaged in a purely formal subject-predicate relation that involves no  $\theta$ -role assignment. This option is not available to an adjunct predicate.

It is true that an XP occupying an adjunct position, like the NP adjunct in (15b) and (16), could also have only the function of a predicate. However, since such an NP does not occupy the position designated for this function within a PrP, it can only be sanctioned as a predicate by virtue of being thematically related to a subject. In (16), however, such a relation cannot be established because *there* is a semantically empty element. The contrast between (15b) and (16) follows from this fact.

These observations lead to a conclusion regarding what seems to be an important distinction between adjunct predicates and main predicates. While an adjunct predicate is sanctioned only by being thematically/semantically related to a subject, a main, sentential predicate is licensed by occupying a designated syntactic position and need not necessarily be involved in a thematic relation with a subject. My claim is that such a distinction cannot be made within the approach developed in Williams 1994 and that this approach therefore cannot account for contrasts such as that between (15b) and (16). Moreover, as I will show, this contrast is an instance of a more general phenomenon and therefore, since it is unable to account for such contrasts, Williams's approach misses an important generalization.

Another illustration of the distinction suggested here involves the interpretation of sentences like these:

- (19) a. John ate the meat cold.  
b. It is cold.

While (19a) can be paraphrased as the conjunction in (20a), it cannot have the meaning paraphrased by the conjunction in (20b).

- (20) a. John ate the meat and the meat was cold.  
b. John ate the meat and it (i.e., the weather) was cold.

What is ruled out for *cold* in (19a) is possible for *cold* in (19b), which can be interpreted as describing a weather condition. This difference requires explanation. That is, if *cold* can be interpreted as a weather predicate in (19b), why can it not be interpreted this way in (19a)?

An answer grows out of the observations and suggestions presented above regarding NP predicates: *cold* in (19b) figures as a main, sentential predicate by virtue of occupying the comple-

ment position within a PrP. In this way, it is sanctioned as a predicate and need not necessarily be related to a subject either thematically or in any other way (e.g., agreement). Using *cold* (and many other predicative expressions) in this way gives rise to *atmospheric interpretation* (Hazout 2004:401). If the subject in (19b) is expletive *it* (rather than referential *it*), then this is the only kind of interpretation this sentence can give rise to. Clearly, *cold* cannot be used this way in (19a). Here, *cold* is an adjunct predicate and, having this position and function, it can only be sanctioned by being semantically/thematically related to a subject.<sup>7</sup> Using a predicate in this way gives rise to what can be referred to as *predicative interpretation*.

In discussing existential sentences, as well as sentences like (19b), I assume in Hazout 2004 that the predicate in such sentences (e.g., *cold* in (19b) or *a big crisis* in (17)) has an external  $\theta$ -role, although it is not involved in a relation of  $\theta$ -role assignment. Williams (2006:650) claims that the account in Hazout 2004 “never explains how *there*-sentences square with the  $\theta$ -Criterion.” However, the relevant discussion in Hazout 2004 concludes with this explicit statement: “A predicate may have a referential subject, but it may also not have one as long as a coherent interpretation can be achieved. There is thus no absolute requirement for a *semantic* relation of predication to hold, even when a predicate has a semantic content that makes such a relation possible” (pp. 403–404).

Observations about the use of various expressions as atmospheric predicates are crucial in reaching that conclusion. The analogy suggested in Hazout 2004 between existential and atmospheric interpretation serves as the point of departure for the proposal made there. Williams (2006) does not mention these observations and suggestions. However, some indication of what Williams might have to say about atmospheric predication can be found in Williams 1994:131–134 in a discussion of expletive *it*. One example Williams considers is (21).

- (21) It is tight/small/suffocating/scary under the porch.  
(Williams 1994:132, (42))

Williams suggests that what we have in (21) are “verbs that take oblique complements.” That is, the verbs (or adjectives) in (21) must be lexical items different from those in (22), which evidently assign an external  $\theta$ -role to a (referential) subject.

- (22) a. The belt is too tight.  
b. This place is small.  
c. The atmosphere in this room is suffocating.  
d. This situation is scary.

<sup>7</sup> Note that what is relevant here is not some requirement, of the kind suggested by Rothstein (2001), to the effect that a “syntactic predicate” must be syntactically “saturated” (in this case by an expletive subject). Such a requirement would be satisfied in the ungrammatical example (i), where—on a theory like Rothstein’s—the adjunct *cold and windy* should be “saturated” by the expletive subject *it*.

(i) \*It rained for days, cold and windy.

Rather, what is crucial is the syntactic status and positioning of the predicate as an adjunct. Since *cold and windy* is an adjunct predicate in (i), it must be thematically/semantically related to a subject. This requirement is not satisfied in (i).

It may be assumed that Williams would apply a similar policy to *cold* in (19a–b), thus leading to a distinction between two lexical items: atmospheric *cold* and predicative *cold*. The interpretations available for *cold* in (19a) and (19b) could then be accounted for if one assumed that predicative *cold* is free to occur in both sentential and adjunct predicate positions whereas atmospheric *cold* must be limited, by stipulation, to being used as a main, sentential predicate (i.e., complement of Pr).

Leaving aside the question of how such a stipulation would be motivated or implemented within the general  $\theta$ -theoretic approach taken in Williams 1994, note that an analysis along these lines is not an option for Williams when it comes to the relation between *there* and its associate. Rather, Williams (2006) defends an approach whereby this is a thematic relation. Indeed, within the general approach to  $\theta$ -theory (and NP-movement) developed in Williams 1994, this relation must be thematic (see footnote 3). Therefore, within this approach no distinction like the one considered above for *cold* can be made, or needs to be made, when it comes to associate NPs in adjunct- or main-predicate position. Since it is generally the case that both main predicates and adjunct predicates can be thematically related to their subject, this should also be possible when it comes to the relation between *there* and its associate if that relation is indeed thematic. The approach developed in Williams 1994 therefore cannot account for the data presented above. Specifically, in simple existential sentences like (17), an associate figures as main predicate, whereas in (11) and (16) (as well as (5a), according to Williams (1994, 2006)), an (intended) associate figures as adjunct predicate. Williams's (1994) approach cannot account for the contrast between (17) and (11)/(16) (or that between (15b) and (16)). Here, I have claimed that Williams's approach also misses the insight that this contrast is an instance of a more general, fundamental phenomenon, namely, a distinction between main predicates and adjunct predicates. An account of these facts, and the general insight they afford, become available within an approach whereby *there* and its associate are viewed as engaged in a purely formal relation that involves no semantic/thematic relatedness. This is the approach defended in Hazout 2004.

In conclusion, in Hazout 2004 I adopted the view, suggested originally in Williams 1994, that the associate NP is a predicate in (simple) existential sentences (e.g., *There is a problem*). But this view of the associate is not extended to my analysis of "verbal existential" sentences (e.g., *There arrived a man from New York*). Moreover, in the analysis developed in Hazout 2004, the view of the associate as predicate is embedded within a set of assumptions about the nature of syntactic predication and the subject-predicate relation that is radically different from what is assumed in Williams 1994. As demonstrated here, the view of the associate as predicate is untenable in the form, and within the set of theoretical assumptions, advocated in Williams 1994, 2006. Rather, the empirical evidence strongly supports my theoretical assumptions.

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## Domain of Aspectual Interpretation

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Thompson (2006) argues for a syntactic account of telicity in which DPs and PPs check a [bounded] feature at an AspP projection above vP to create a telic predicate. I provide evidence for an AspP projection between vP and VP and argue that AspP and everything AspP dominates defines a domain of aspectual interpretation, a syntactic space within which elements must be located in order to affect the telicity of a predicate. I provide data showing that elements above AspP cannot affect aspectual interpretation. These data pose a serious problem for Thompson's account.

*Keywords:* telicity, inner aspect, location PPs, goal PPs, bare plurals, mass nouns, external arguments, internal arguments

In this article, I remark on Thompson's (2006) syntactic account of telicity. Thompson defines telicity in the following way: "[E]vents that have a distinct, definite, and inherent end point are telic, and those that are ongoing in time are atelic" (p. 212). Following Borer (2005), Thompson claims that the direct object of a telic event moves to an aspectual projection AspP, while the direct object of an atelic event does not. Moreover, she assumes that "AspP is located directly

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