

*Scenic Narrative and the Mimetic Present***2.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I discuss the use of the present for preterite in scenic narrative, that is, narrative passages where discourse time comes close to story time.<sup>1</sup> The following example illustrates this use:

- (1) ἐγὼ μὲν εἰς τὸ χωρίον  
 ἐμβὰς ἐπορευόμεν πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ πάνυ  
 πόρρωθεν, εἶναι τις φιλόφρωνος σφόδρα  
 ἐπιδέξιός τε βουλόμενος προσείπα καὶ  
 ‘ἦκω τί **φημί** ‘πρὸς σε, πάτερ, ἰδεῖν τί σε  
 σπεύδων ὑπὲρ σοῦ πράγμ’· <ὁ δ’> εὐθύς, ‘ἀνόσιε  
 ἄνθρωπέ,’ **φῆσιν**, ‘εἰς τὸ χωρίον δέ μου  
 ἦκεις <σύ;> τί μαθών;’ βῶλον **αἶρεται** τινα·  
 ταύτην **ἀφίησ’** εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτό μου.

Entering his land,  
 I walked towards him and  
greeted him from very far,  
 wanting to be a very pleasant and tactful man.  
 ‘I have,’ **say** I, ‘come to you, father, to see you  
 about some serious matter concerning you.’  
 But he immediately – ‘Unholy man,’ **says** he, ‘have you come to  
 my land? What’s your problem?’ He **picks up** a clod of earth;  
 he **throws** it right to my face.

(Menander, *The misanthrope* 103–11)

I argue that the present tense here designates the events as they occur in a *simulation* or *re-enactment* staged by the narrator (compare Chapter 1, Section 1.6). This pretence of re-enactment consists in an analogous

<sup>1</sup> See Introduction, Section 1.2.2.1 with note 5.

relationship between the narrative experience and actual experience – in other words, in *narrative mimesis*.

The distinction between *mimesis* and *diegesis* – also described in terms of *showing* versus *telling* – is a much-discussed topic in literary theory.<sup>2</sup> Importantly, there are two distinct understandings of the contrast between the two modes, and both are relevant for my discussion of the present for preterite in this chapter.

Under one interpretation, which is usually traced back to Plato (*Republic* 392c–394c), the terms ‘diegesis’ and ‘mimesis’ designate different *modes of communication*. ‘Diegesis’ is here understood as *description*, that is, ‘the use of arbitrary symbols to denote things categorically’ (Clark [2016: 324]). Mimesis consists in *depiction*, that is, ‘[creating] one physical scene to represent another’ (*ibidem*). In the diegetic mode, the narrator describes what happened using conventional linguistic means; in the mimetic mode, the speaker acts out the events by means of iconic gestures, sound effects, direct speech representation and similar phenomena.

Alternatively, the mimesis-diegesis opposition is understood in terms of different *modes of narrative discourse*.<sup>3</sup> This idea can be traced back to another ancient critic: pseudo-Longinus, the author of the treatise *On the sublime*. Comparing the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (9.13), he argues that the latter is mainly ‘diegetic’ in character (διηγηματικόν), while the former is ‘dramatic’ (δραματικόν) and ‘actively engaging’ (ἐναγώνιον).<sup>4</sup> As Ooms and de Jonge (2013: 102–3) put it, mere diegesis ‘implies detachedness on the part of the listener’, ‘a relaxed distance to the story’. On the other hand, ‘active engagement’, as I understand it, means that the narrative is construed in such a way that to process it feels similar to processing immediate experience. This is mimesis as narrative *experientiality*.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Booth (1961: 3–20); Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 106–16); Toolan (1988: 126); Linhares-Dias (2006: 7 and *passim*); Nünning and Sommer (2008: 337–40); Klauk and Köppe (2014). In cognitivist approaches, ‘showing’ is associated with *immersion* (Ryan [2001]; Allan et al. [2017]) and *enactment* (Kuzmičová [2012a], [2012b]; Troscianko [2014a], [2014b]; Grethlein and Huitink [2017]).

<sup>3</sup> For the term ‘mimetic mode’, see Fleischman (1990: 61–3); Bakker (1997). Allan (2009) distinguishes between an ‘immediate diegetic mode’ and a ‘displaced diegetic mode’, which is terminologically more consistent. See also Chafe (1994); Kroon (2002).

<sup>4</sup> For the semantics of the term ἐναγώνιος, see Ooms and de Jonge (2013). Rijksbaron (2015: 248, n. 101) objects to an active translation of the term (‘engaging’) on the ground that ‘it seems never to be construed with a complement; thus, ἐναγώνιος τοῦ ἀκροατοῦ et sim. are not found (as against ἔμπειρος κακῶν etc.)’. I find this unconvincing. Uses of the term elsewhere in *On the sublime* are clearly connected to the idea of audience involvement: see 18.2, 26.1.

<sup>5</sup> See Fludernik (1996: 35–8) on the relationship between narrative experientiality and mimesis.

The general principle here is that the narrative becomes more mimetic or ‘experiential’ as the narrator pretends to be bound by the constraints involved in the situation of an on-the-scene report (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2). Some specific aspects are the following: First, mimetic narrative consists in evoking concrete events (i.e., events that can actually be witnessed) rather than abstractions.<sup>6</sup> Second, mimesis is associated with a scenic narrative tempo, while diegesis involves temporal compression.<sup>7</sup> Third, in mimetic narrative the immediacy of actual experience is reflected by grammatical simplicity.<sup>8</sup>

Both these modes of narrative mimesis – depiction and engaging description – support the pretence that the past events are presently simulated or re-enacted. The present tense highlights this construal by designating the events as they occur in the simulation.<sup>9</sup> Example (1) illustrates this. First, the dialogue between the speaker and the old man is represented in direct speech (depiction). By acting out the dialogue, the speaker makes it immediately accessible to his addressees. On stage, this effect may have been enhanced by mimicry, with the speaker acting polite when representing his own speech but acting gruffly when representing the speech of the old man.

With respect to description, the present forms *αἶρεται* (‘picks up’) and *ἄφίησι* (‘throws’) mark concrete actions that are easily imagined.<sup>10</sup> Second, discourse time comes very close to story time here. This is partly due to the representation of direct speech: hearing the speaker reproduce what was said takes about as long as hearing the actual words that were spoken in the actual past situation. Moreover, the subsequent actions of the old

<sup>6</sup> For example, Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 109) contrasts the utterance *John was angry with his wife* with *John looked at his wife, his eyebrows pursed, his lips contracted, his fists clenched*. The first description (*was angry*) is the result of abstraction and interpretation, while the second description focuses on what can actually be observed. See also Grünbaum (2007); Kuzmičova (2012b); Grethlein and Huitink (2017).

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., Toolan (1988: 126); Linhares-Dias (2006: 5); Kuzmičova (2012b: 28–9).

<sup>8</sup> Toolan (1988: 126, my italics): ‘We can accordingly predict that diegetic narration will have more manipulations of temporal order, duration and frequency, *more evident ranking or hierarchical ordering of event-presentation*; that *diegesis is hypotactic while mimesis is paratactic*.’ Compare Kroon (2002); Allan (2007 etc.).

<sup>9</sup> As pseudo-Longinus puts it (25.1): *ὅταν γε μὴν τὰ παρεληλυθότα τοῖς χρόνοις εἰσάγησιν ὡς γινόμενα καὶ παρόντα, οὐ διήγησιν ἔτι τὸν λόγον ἀλλ’ ἐναγώνιον πρᾶγμα ποιήσεις* (‘when you present events that are past as if they are happening and are present, the discourse will no longer be a diegesis but an actively engaging affair’).

<sup>10</sup> Comparable instances of the present for preterite are found in prose: Hdt. 9.55 *νεικέων δὲ ὁ Ἀμομφάρετος λαμβάνει πέτρον ἀμφοτέρῃσι τῆσι χερσὶ* (‘arguing, Amompharetus **takes** a rock with both his hands’); X. Cyr. 8.3.28 *ὁ δὲ καταμύων ἴησι τῆ βῶλω* (‘he, narrowing his eyes, **throws** the clod’).

man (picking up a clod of earth and throwing it) take only a few moments, roughly coinciding with the time it takes to narrate them.

As for grammatical simplicity, the clauses βῶλον αἶρεται τινα ('he picks up a clod of earth') and ταύτην ἀφίησ' εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτό μου ('he throws it right to my face') are short, containing only the bare essentials. Moreover, they are paratactically connected – contrast the hypotactic construction in a very comparable context: λαβῶν δ' ἀφῆκε μάρμαρον πέτρον ('taking a crystalline rock, he threw it'; Euripides, *Phoenician women* 1401). Also noteworthy is the lack of a connective particle (*asyndeton*) introducing the clause βῶλον αἶρεται τινα ('he picks up a clod'). This is uncommon in ancient Greek; here the phenomenon serves to invest the designated event with a sense of immediacy.<sup>11</sup> In short, all aspects described here contribute to an analogous relationship between the processing of the narrative and the processing of immediate experience.

Now that the concept of narrative mimesis has been clarified, a final variable must be added to the equation. As we have seen, mimetic storytelling engages the audience by the way it simulates actual experience. However, even in actual experience, we can be more engaged or detached in our relationship to what is happening around us. On one end of the spectrum is a completely familiar, stable situation, where we may relax to the point where our consciousness is in a state of mere resting wakefulness.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, when something unusual or unexpected happens, our attention is heightened – especially if the event poses some kind of threat. The same will be true for narrative processing: if the represented events are high in *communicative dynamism*, that is, if they are particularly newsworthy or relevant to the discourse (McNeill [1992], [2005]), our engagement with them will be stronger.<sup>13</sup>

This, again, is illustrated by example (1). The narrator uses the present tense to highlight a moment of crisis. The premise of the story is that the speaker, Pyrrhias, went to the old man on behalf of his master to ask him if the man would give his daughter away in marriage. The preterite forms ἐπορευόμεν ('walked') and προσεῖπα ('greeted') prepare for the interaction between the men, which is the main point of the story. Contrary to the

<sup>11</sup> There is also *asyndeton* in the next clause, but this is mitigated by the use of the anaphoric pronoun (ταύτην ['that (clod)']).

<sup>12</sup> In cognitive neuroscience, such a resting state has been associated with a 'default mode network', see, e.g., Buckner et al. (2008); Broyd et al. (2009). Martini et al. (2007) identify six different resting state networks.

<sup>13</sup> For the similar notions of 'tellability' and 'reportability', see Introduction, Section I.2.2.1 with note 6.

expectation of the speaker, this interaction goes wrong immediately, and he finds himself in a dangerous situation. In that moment of being attacked, the speaker will have moved from a relatively relaxed state to one of acute awareness. Suddenly, it is completely uncertain what will happen next, and every moment counts. The present tense, along with the mimetic strategies discussed above, serves to convey this feeling of crisis to the audience.

To sum up, the main argument in this chapter is that the present for preterite in scenic narrative designates the past events as they occur in a present simulation or re-enactment and that this pretence is supported by the mimetic (or 'experiential') character of the narrative. In Sections 2.2–2.4, I distinguish three levels of narrative mimesis. The first concerns the conceptual content evoked by the speaker and the degree to which the processing of these conceptualisations engages sensorimotor processes (*mental simulation*; Section 2.2). Next, I consider how these conceptualisations are expressed in terms of physical mimesis (depiction; Section 2.3) and linguistic construal (Section 2.4).<sup>14</sup> In Section 2.5, I first take stock of the general hypothesis that narrative mimesis correlates with tense-switching in light of the results presented in Sections 2.2–2.4. Then I argue that communicative dynamism moderates the influence of narrative mimesis on tense-switching. Finally, I present two contrastive case studies as a test case for the account of the present for preterite presented in this chapter (Section 2.6).

### 2.1.1 *Methods of Analysis*

Before we begin, I should explain certain issues of methodology. I use a range of analytical methods in this chapter. Discussions of individual examples serve to illustrate theoretical points. In other cases, collections of examples, or contrastive case studies, are used to suggest a pattern where the underlying variables are hard to quantify. Where possible, however, I try to corroborate my argument with quantitative analyses. With respect to these analyses, three main issues must be addressed here so that the reader may form a clear understanding of the meaning of the presented results. First is the matter of the selection of text passages (Section 2.1.1.1); second, the trimming of the data to ensure a focused comparison (Section 2.1.1.2); and third, the interpretation of the relevant statistics (Section 2.1.1.3).

<sup>14</sup> The distinction between conceptualisation, on the one hand, and the expression of these conceptualisations through physical mimesis or linguistic construal, on the other hand, is made here for descriptive purposes. In reality, these aspects are intertwined: see Section 2.5.

### 2.1.1.1 Selection of Text Passages

We are interested here in a particular usage of the present for preterite. As I argue throughout this study, the present for preterite has a range of different uses, and we should not expect the rules governing tense-switching to be the same for each of these. For example, the mimetic usage is associated with grammatical simplicity. This is different to what we expect with the diegetic use, as I will explain in Chapter 3. When analysing tense-switching, it is important to, as much as possible, isolate instances of a particular use of the present for preterite from other types. Moreover, we should make sure that the preterites that constitute the contrastive corpus are contextually related to these present forms, so that we are explaining tense-switching within a coherent subgroup.

I found that the best way to address this issue was to establish a corpus of narratives in drama where the narrator was an eyewitness. Such narratives are generally vivid in character, so that the use of the present for preterite in these contexts will be likely to conform to the mimetic type (compare de Jong [1991: 38–49]; Allan [2009]). I have included all messenger narratives, other narratives where a character reports something that has occurred during the action of the play and some narratives that report events that occurred before the action of the play but which have a vivid character.<sup>15</sup> I have excluded prologue narratives, where there is usually a great distance between discourse time and story time. In some cases, I excluded the beginning part of a narrative for similar reasons.<sup>16</sup> There is an element of subjectivity in some of my criteria for inclusion and exclusion, but as I am looking at tense-switching *within* the selected corpus, there is not too much danger of a selection bias affecting my results. The corpus consists of the following passages:<sup>17</sup>

Aeschylus: *Persians* 181–210; 355–428; 447–70; 480–507; *Agamemnon* 1382–92; *Eumenides* 39–45.

<sup>15</sup> E.g., *A. Pers.* 181–210, where Atossa reports the dream she had about her son Xerxes.

<sup>16</sup> But never in the case of messenger narratives. An example where I did cut a portion of the narrative is *S. OT* 774–99, where Oedipus tells the story of his life up to the point where he crossed paths with King Laius. The narrative of the actual confrontation between the two was included (800–13).

<sup>17</sup> Boter (2012) argues in some cases that the narrative portion extends further, because he is more liberal in his understanding of when a present form refers to the past (e.g., *S. Ant.* 1240–3 with κέῖται ['lies']; *A. Eu.* 46–54 with εὕδει ['sleeps'], ῥέγκουσι ['snore'], λείβουσι ['drip']). Although I agree that the dogma of the non-existence of present for preterite forms with stative and durative verbs should be rejected, I find many of Boter's discussions problematic; compare Rijksbaron (2015), and see Appendix, Section A.2.1. With respect to the present investigation, this matter is of little importance, because these present forms would have been excluded anyway due to the implicit imperfective construal: see Section 2.1.1.2.

Aristophanes: *Acharnians* 178–85; 1183–8; *Knights* 625–82; *Clouds* 1354–76; *Wasps* 1304–23; *Birds* 494–8; *Women at the Thesmophoria* 479–89; 504–16; *Assemblywomen* 313–19; 395–436; *Plutus* 653–747.

Euripides: *Cyclops* 382–424; *Alcestis* 158–95; *Medea* 1136–1219; *Children of Heracles* 800–60; *Hippolytus* 1173–1248; *Andromache* 1085–1157; *Hecuba* 521–80; 1148–75; *Suppliant women* 650–725; *Heracles* 922–1012; *Ion* 1122–1225; *Electra* 509–17; 774–855; *Iphigeneia amongst the Taurians* 260–335; 1327–1410; *Helen* 1526–1617; *Phoenician women* 1090–1195; 1359–1475; *Orestes* 866–949; *Bacchantes* 618–31; 677–768; 1043–1147; *Iphigeneia in Aulis* 1543–1606; *Rhesus*<sup>18</sup> 287–308; 762–98.

Sophocles: *Ajax* 285–318; 723–32; 749–82 (excluding the embedded narrative in 762–77); *Electra* 681–756; 893–906; *King Oedipus* 800–13; 1241–77; *Antigone* 249–75; 407–36; 1186–9; 999–1013; 1196–1239; *Women of Trachis* 688–704; 755–805; 900–42; *Philoctetes* 359–81; *Oedipus at Colonus* 1587–1655.

Menander was not included because his works have been transmitted only fragmentarily.

### 2.1.1.2 *Trimming the Data*

One of the main methodological problems of the few studies of the present for preterite in Classical Greek that include quantitative data is the lack of a *focused comparison*. The category ‘preterite’ is much more internally heterogeneous than the present for preterite with respect to its conditions of use. To begin with, the two main preterites, the aorist and the imperfect, do not stand in the same relation to the present: the present alternates with the aorist much more easily than with the imperfect (see Introduction, Section I.4.2). Moreover, the preterite is used in certain discourse contexts and syntagms that strongly disfavour the present.<sup>19</sup> While these restrictions are not absolute, it makes sense to exclude such cases from the data. My aim here is to reveal correlations between tense use and other parameters in contexts where the use of the present for preterite is not restricted by extraneous factors.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> The play is of doubtful authorship, but this is of little consequence. See Liapis (2012: lxxvii–lxxv), who argues for a date in the middle or second half of the fourth century BC.

<sup>19</sup> Rijksbaron (2006), (2011a), (2015); Allan (2009), (2011a).

<sup>20</sup> The problem of the heterogeneity of the contrastive data is stronger when the present for preterite is contrasted with a group that includes all other tense forms, as in Allan (2011a: 40–2). Sometimes, groups are not compared at all. For example, Rijksbaron (2006: 132; 2011a: 8) lists the counts for the present for preterite with different discourse particles, but he does not do the same for a contrastive sample of preterites. The converse is to contrast different tenses within a single category.

Let me illustrate the danger of treating the contrastive data indiscriminately. Imagine a distribution where, in a sample of 100 present forms and 100 preterite forms, we find 10 instances of the particle οὖν ‘so’ in collocation with the present, but 30 instances in collocation with the preterite. We might then conclude that the presence of the particle οὖν ‘so’ is negatively correlated with the odds of the present being used instead of the preterite. However, imagine that, on closer inspection, it turns out that almost all of the 30 instances of the preterite in combination with the particle are found in a non-narrative discourse context, or in combination with a negation. If the present for preterite is rarely used in such cases to begin with, then the conclusion may well be that the particle οὖν ‘so’ in fact favours the present for preterite *in those contexts where its use cannot be ruled out on external grounds*. It would have been best, then, to exclude those other cases from the beginning.

The principles for selection are described in more detail in the Appendix, but here I present the main considerations. The following cases were excluded:

- (a) clauses that are not narrative in the strict sense (i.e., narratorial comments or clauses that violate the principle of sequential order);
- (b) temporal subordinate clauses (introduced by the conjunctions ἔπει, ὡς, ὅτε [‘when’]);<sup>21</sup>
- (c) restrictive relative clauses;<sup>22</sup>
- (d) clauses containing negated assertions.

The following criteria for exclusion pertain to the verb phrase itself:

- (e) morphologically ambiguous verbs;<sup>23</sup>

For example, de Jong (1991: 40) presents data to criticise Fischl’s (1910) theses concerning the function of the present for preterite in Euripidean messenger narratives. One of Fischl’s claims is that the present tense is used to highlight the messenger’s own actions and perceptions. De Jong counters that ‘the Messenger’s own actions and perceptions are more often than not in the imperfect or aorist: of the 24 first person singular predicates concerned, 14 are aorists, 4 imperfects and 6 historic presents’ (the counts for the plural are given next). This certainly shows that the use of the present tense here is not a rule, but it may still be that the odds of the present tense being used with the first person are higher than in the case of the third person. Compare Section 2.2.3.

<sup>21</sup> Technically speaking, only the conjunction ὅτε (‘when’), which is rarely used, has a strictly temporal value. The other two are underspecified with respect to the real world relationship between the event designated in the subordinate clause and the event designated in the main clause. See Buijs (2005: 13–15).

<sup>22</sup> I did include subordinate clauses introducing an endpoint or result (introduced by ἕς ὃ [‘until’], ὥστε [‘so that’], πρὶν [‘until’]).

<sup>23</sup> See Introduction, Section I.4.3. I did include certain cases where we can be almost certain that the present is the correct reading because an imperfective construal seems out of the question



- (f) verb forms with imperfective aspectual construal, either explicit (in the case of the preterite) or implicit (in the case of the present; see example [2] below);
- (g) verbs where the aorist has a specific meaning that is (almost) never found with the present for preterite: ἔσχον ('acquired') from ἔχω ('have'); ἔδοξε ('it was decided') from δοκεῖ ('it seems'); ἔγνων ('realised' or 'decided') from γινώσκω ('know').<sup>24</sup>

The point of these selection rules was to find a balance between excising a maximum number of preterites and retaining as many present forms as possible. The greatest compromise here pertained to aspectuality (f). As noted above, the present is much less likely to alternate with the imperfect than with the aorist. It therefore made sense to exclude the imperfect forms (and there were many of them) from the corpus. But this meant I also had to exclude those present for preterite forms where the implicit aspectual construal seemed to be imperfective. An example is the following (see also Introduction, Section I.4.2):

- (2) εἶτα καταβαίνω λάθρα.  
 ὁ δ' ἀνὴρ ἐρωτᾷ: 'ποῖ σὺ καταβαίνεις;' ὅποι;  
 στρόφος μ' ἔχει τὴν γαστέρ', ὄνερ, κώδύνη  
 εἰς τὸν κοπρῶν' οὖν ἔρχομαι.' βᾶδιζέ νυν.'

Then I **go down** in secret.

But my husband **asks** me: 'Where are you going down to?' 'Where? my stomach is turning, husband, and hurting.  
 So I'm going to the toilet.' 'Go then.'

(Aristophanes, *Women at the Thesmophoria* 482–5)

The action designated by the present καταβαίνω ('go down') is not completed when the next event on the narrative main line occurs: the woman's progression is interrupted by her husband (ποῖ σὺ καταβαίνεις;

(e.g., *E. Pb.* 1458 ὠθεῖ ['drives']). Similar considerations apply to certain preterite forms that may be either aorist or imperfect.

<sup>24</sup> I did not exclude cases on the basis of actionality in this data set (on actional categories, see Introduction, Section I.4.4, and Appendix, Section A.2.1). The present for preterite is generally dispreferred with atelic verb phrases, that is, activities (dynamic: e.g., *sing*) and states (non-dynamic: *be*). Stative aorists were relatively rare in the selected corpus anyway. With respect to activities, I found it hard to come up with solid criteria for determining the bounds of this category. The inclusion of these instances (about 60 of the total 424 aorists) is not expected to heighten the probability of finding false correlations between certain variables and tense usage, because there is no a priori reason to assume that these aorists behave markedly differently with respect to the variables investigated here (e.g., sentence complexity, particle usage) than the other aorists. See also Section 2.2.1 on the issue of activity verb phrases.

['Where are you going down to?']) and only after explaining herself is she allowed to continue her way downstairs. Such cases amounted to almost 30,<sup>25</sup> which seems a substantial number; but excising them allowed for a focused comparison between the 183 present forms that remained and the 424 aorists that formed the contrastive group.

### 2.1.1.3 *Interpreting the Statistics*

The second main issue with previous quantitative analyses of the present for preterite in Classical Greek is that they do not provide the statistics required to adequately assess the potential meaning of a distribution. For example, Allan (2011a: 40) reports that 51 of the 150 clauses containing a present for preterite in his corpus were introduced by the particle *καί* ('and'), while this was true only for 33 of the 150 verbs in the contrastive corpus. The meaning of this distribution depends upon whether the contrast is made with another specific particle or with the 'rest' category; for the present discussion, I will assume a contrast with the particle *δέ*, another form of 'and-coordination' (Bonifazi et al. [2016: IV.2, §1]; for the contrast between *καί* and *δέ*, see Allan [2011a: 41–2]).

If we compare the figures for *καί* with those for *δέ*, we find the following distribution:

	Present	Other tenses
<i>καί</i>	51	33
<i>δέ</i>	54	60

This distribution suggests that the odds of the present being used are stronger when the particle *καί* introduces the sentence than in the case of *δέ*. What is missing at this point is a measure of the size of the effect. Moreover, we have no indication of how likely it is that this distribution is merely the result of chance.

In my analyses, I use the *odds ratio* to express the effect of a variable on the tendency for the present to be used instead of the preterite. The odds ratio is calculated as follows. First, we take the odds of the present being used under a baseline condition. What the baseline condition is depends

<sup>25</sup> Excluding cases that are morphologically ambiguous between the present and the unaugmented imperfect (point [e] above). For a list of excluded cases, see Appendix, Section A.2.2.1.

on how we formulate the hypothesis. If we hypothesise that the particle  $\kappa\alpha\iota$  as discourse connector increases the odds of the present being used in comparison with  $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$ , we take  $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$  as the baseline condition.

Under the baseline condition, the odds of the present being used are  $54/60 = 0.9$ . Then we calculate the corresponding odds under the 'experimental' condition. Here the odds are  $51/33 = 1.545$ . The odds ratio is the ratio between these odds, that is,  $1.545/0.9 = 1.717$ . This means that *the odds of the present being used instead of the other tenses increase* by a factor 1.717 when  $\kappa\alpha\iota$  is used as a discourse connector instead of  $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$ . (This value is not affected by the fact that, in reality, the ratio between the total number of present forms against the total number of other tense forms is much different from that in the sample used for this analysis.)

Whenever we look at a certain distribution in a limited dataset, there will always be some variability due to chance. A distribution is only *statistically significant* when the probability of that distribution occurring simply by chance is very low. This '*p*-value' can be calculated by means of logistic regression (I used IBM SPSS statistics to run this procedure). In the present case, the *p*-value is 0.064.<sup>26</sup> That means that there is a chance of, roughly, 1 in 16 to obtain a distribution such as the one observed here by chance. It is still relatively uncertain, then, that the observed distribution is meaningful – the value of 0.064 is above the (arbitrary) rule-of-thumb value of 0.05 for statistical significance.

While I report *p*-values in my analyses, it should be clearly understood that these do not have the same status as they would in a proper experimental study. It is impossible to generate new data for Classical Greek. The texts on which I test my hypotheses are the same texts that have partly informed these hypotheses, either through the work of other scholars or through my own observations. The reason this is problematic lies in the nature of significance testing. A significance test tells us how likely it is that a certain distribution is the result of chance alone. However, if we test multiple related hypotheses on the same data, we are more likely to find an unusual distribution that is merely due to chance. It is like rolling a hundred-sided die: the chance of rolling a particular number is 1 in 100, but if we roll the die a hundred times, this chance increases dramatically.

This is why proper hypothesis testing requires the hypothesis to be formulated before looking at the dataset on which it is tested. If we mine a

<sup>26</sup> B .541 (constant -.105), standard error = .292.

certain dataset for interesting distributions, we are essentially ‘rolling the die’ an unspecified number of times. When we then do a significance test on this distribution in the same dataset, it remains wholly obscure how many hypotheses were implicitly rejected (because it was found that those distributions were not interesting). It is therefore unclear how meaningful the resulting  $p$ -value is.

To justify and explain my reporting of  $p$ -values here, let me first note that I did not perform ‘data dredging’. This is the procedure of automatically testing an exhaustive number of possible correlations in a certain dataset (‘rolling the die’ thousands of times). I only explored a limited number of possibilities, and my hypotheses were largely informed by the work of other scholars, some working on different languages (e.g., Kroon [2002] on Latin) or on different parts of the Classical Greek corpus (e.g., Allan [2007], [2011a] on Thucydides). Moreover, the hypotheses form a theoretically coherent whole. The point is that I did not arbitrarily go looking for any correlations that might turn up in the data.

Now, the fact remains that the  $p$ -values cannot be properly corrected for the total number of tests I ran, so that they only represent the *intrinsic probability* associated with the reported distributions. I believe that this is justifiable given the present conditions (the impossibility of generating new data), so long as it is properly understood what the  $p$ -value represents. The point of reporting  $p$ -values is purely to give some indication of the saliency of the distributions reported here. If I would just report the counts (so many present forms against so many aorists under this or that condition), the reader would have no idea whatsoever whether such a distribution might actually mean something.

More specifically, the function of  $p$ -values in the present context is threefold. First, it guards us against drawing conclusions too quickly. If the  $p$ -value is high even under the present circumstances, then this means that we should be extra skeptical of attaching any value to a certain distribution.

Second, it is useful to compare different  $p$ -values. No matter how many tests we run on the same dataset, a *difference* between  $p$ -values is always instructive. If one test yields a  $p$ -value of 0.01, while another yields a  $p$ -value of 0.001, we know at least that the latter distribution is more likely to be meaningful than the former.

Third, I would maintain that even in the present context, a very low  $p$ -value is strongly suggestive of a meaningful correlation, granted that the hypothesis in question is simple and clearly motivated, and the counts yield a substantial odds ratio.

#### 2.1.1.4 Summary

I have taken the following steps to make my quantitative analyses as meaningful as possible:

- (a) selecting a corpus of narratives in drama to zoom in on the mimetic use of the present for preterite;
- (b) trimming the data to ensure a focused comparison between the present and its main competitor, the narrative aorist;
- (c) reporting odds ratios to express effect size, and reporting *p*-values to give an indication of the markedness of the distributions that obtained.

## 2.2 Mental Simulation

The act of narrating starts with conceptualisation: recalling the events in memory or imagining events that never happened. Cognitive scientists have shown that conceptualisation is an *embodied* process, which means that it involves activating sensorimotor processes. As Lakoff and Johnson (1999: 4) put it: ‘The same neural and cognitive mechanisms that allow us to perceive and move around also create our conceptual systems and modes of reason.’<sup>27</sup> For example, ‘thinking about a chair involves activating (or partially activating) the same neural substrates that are involved in seeing, touching, and interacting with a real chair’ (Hostetter and Alibali [2008: 497]). This process is called *mental simulation*.

As I argued in the Introduction, a narrative is mimetic to the degree in which it evokes actual experience. In mental simulation, we find an important aspect of narrative mimesis. If conceptualisation resides in mental simulation, and mental simulation involves activating the same processes involved in actual movement and perception, then the processing of a narrative will feel like undergoing actual experiences to a certain extent. In this way, mental simulation supports the linguistic construal of narrated events as occurring in the present (compare Langacker’s [2011] idea of the ‘historical present’ as involving *mental replay*). This involves both the narrator and the narratees: the narrator mentally recreates the events in order to translate them into linguistic discourse, and the addressees do the same as they decode the message.

While this helps to explain how the use of the present for preterite is facilitated in the first place, the next question is what motivates the speaker

<sup>27</sup> See also, e.g., Pecher and Zwaan (2005); Gibbs (2006); Shapiro (2010); Bergen (2012).

to actually use the present to designate the events as they occur in the simulation. After all, speakers do not use the present for preterite all the time. I argue that the crucial variable is the *activation strength* of the simulation. The more the simulation feels like actual experience, the stronger the propensity for the speaker to use the present for preterite. I break this down into two aspects.

The first factor is the *concreteness* of the underlying conceptualisation (Hostetter and Alibali [2008: 504]).<sup>28</sup> If mental simulation consists in activating sensorimotor processes, it stands to reason that the activation will be stronger when the simulated event is itself a concrete physical action or something that imposes itself upon the senses (a sight or sound). Furthermore, the strength of the simulation will depend on the intensity of the designated event – the degree of force involved in a physical action or the strength of the impression made by a sight or sound. The hypothesis, then, is that the odds of the present for preterite being used increase when the designated event is concrete and intense.<sup>29</sup>

The second factor is *memory*: events that made a strong impression when they occurred will be simulated more vividly (for the role of memory in tense-switching see Park et al. [2011]). I translate this into the hypothesis that the present for preterite will be used more often when the verb is in the first person.<sup>30</sup> The rationale behind this hypothesis is that the simulation of sensorimotor processes will be stronger if the conceptualiser was actively involved in the original processes.

The following example illustrates these points:

- (3) κάγω νομίσας ὄρθρον ἐχώρου Ἄλιμουτᾶδε, κάρτι προκύπτω  
 ἔξω τείχους καὶ λωποδύτης παίει ῥοπάλω με τὸ νῶτον·  
 κάγω πίπτω μέλλω τε βοᾶν, ὁ δ' ἀπέβλισε θοιμάτιόν μου.

I {thought} it was morning and set off for Halimus. And I just **stoop forward**

out of the city walls and a mugger **hits** me in the back with a club.

I **fall** down, and I'm **about to** shout, but he extracted my coat.

(Aristophanes, *Birds* 496–8)

<sup>28</sup> On concreteness, narrative mimesis and sensorimotor simulation, see also Grünbaum (2007); Kuzmičova (2012a), (2012b); Troscianko (2014b); Grethlein and Huitink (2017); Allan (2018).

<sup>29</sup> De Jong (1991: 39) reports that Fischl (1910: 54–5) found that the present tense is used to mark 'events which make a strong appeal to the senses'.

<sup>30</sup> Again, Fischl (1910: 54–5) made a similar claim: see de Jong (1991: 39).

Most of the present tense forms in this passage designate highly concrete and dynamic events. The phrase προκύπτω ἔξω τείχους literally means 'I stoop forward so as to emerge with the head from the city wall', thus designating a very particular kind of bodily movement. The form παίει ('hits') marks a violent physical action, and πίπτω ('fall') designates quick, involuntary movement. The phrase μέλλω βοᾶν ('I am about to shout') does not denote a concrete action, but the feeling of wanting to shout is something that can be re-experienced by the speaker. Moreover, all described actions were either carried out by the speaker or closely involved the speaker, which will make them stand out vividly in his memory. (Of course, this is somewhat problematic as the memory belongs to a fictional character; I address this issue in Section 2.2.3.)

I will now explore these hypotheses in more detail. The parameter of concreteness I break down in two parts. First, I present a survey of verb groups with a strong predilection for the present for preterite (Section 2.2.1). Then I discuss some instances where explicit mention is made of the limbs (Section 2.2.2). Finally, we will consider tense usage with the first person versus the third person (Section 2.2.3).

### 2.2.1 *Verb Type*

If the concreteness of the conceptualised event enhances the strength of the simulation, and if present for preterite usage is correlated to simulation strength, then we should expect the odds of the present for preterite being used to increase when the verb phrase designates a concrete action.

To test this hypothesis, one would, ideally, compile a list of all verbs occurring in dramatic narrative and rate them on a scale of concreteness and then proceed to look for a correlation between scores on this scale and tense use. In practice, this procedure is unworkable, or at least requires a large-scale effort that transcends the bounds of this study. There are just too many verbs, and determining points on a concreteness scale for verbs is a problematic procedure – more so as verbs have different meanings and metaphorical usages.

A survey of the corpus does show, however, that most verbs that have a high present-to-aorist ratio (compared to the general baseline of 0.43) designate highly concrete events. I present the most salient findings in Table 2.1. Only verb groups that yielded at least 4 instances were included. There is some degree of arbitrariness in the groupings, but the rationale behind them will, I hope, be readily apparent (for example, I subsume

Table 2.1 *Tense and verb types*

Verb type	<i>Present</i>	<i>Aorist</i>	Ratio
πίπτω ('fall', 'throw oneself at')	<b>16</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(infinite)</b>
βάλλω ('hit [projectile]')	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(infinite)</b>
βοάω 'shout'	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2.5</b>
'See'	<b>21</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2.33</b>
ὁράω	20	9	
λεύσσω	1	0	
δέρκομαι	1	0	
'Hit', 'strike', 'stab'	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1.286</b>
παίω <sup>a</sup>	5	6	
κόπτω	1	1	
κεντέω	3	0	
'Throw'	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
ρίπτω	1	2	
βάλλω	2	1	
'Hear'	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
ἀκούω	0	3	
κλύω	3	0	
'Loosen'	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
λύω	1	2	
χαλάω	1	0	
'Draw, pull'	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0.8</b>
σπάω	1	5	
ἔλκω	3	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>32</b>	

<sup>a</sup>I have not included cases where the verb is used intransitively (S. *El.* 902 ἐμπαίει ['hits'], *OT* 1252 εἰσέπεισεν ['crashed into']).

'hit', 'strike' and 'stab' under a single heading).<sup>31</sup> Note that the present forms of this select group of verbs amount to almost two-fifths of the total number of present forms in the corpus ( $72/183 = 0.39$ ).<sup>32</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Whether there are other verb groups that meet the criteria of a minimum of four instances in the corpus and a high present-to-aorist ratio depends on how one groups verbs. The only obvious case that is left out from Table 2.1 is 'send' (4 present forms, 0 aorists, if we count the verb πέμπω and the verb ἵημι in A. *Pers.* 470 – the only instance where it refers to the sending of a person). The use of the present for preterite with this verb, which is common in prose as well (see, e.g., Lambert [2011: 211–21]), belongs to the diegetic type: see Chapter 3.

<sup>32</sup> Composite verbs were counted as well. I have excluded cases where the verb was used metaphorically: E. *Hipp.* 1218 ἐμπίπτει ('falls into', said of fear); S. *El.* 902 ἐμπαίει ('hits', of a mental vision; also, the verb is used intransitively, see note a.), *Ant.* 1187 βάλλει ('hits', of a sound).



Let me discuss these findings in more detail, breaking my discussion down in four groups: transitive action, intransitive movement, perception and sound production.

- (a) *Transitive action.* Five of the verb groups listed in Table 2.1 designate transitive action: ‘hit’, said of a projectile or a person sending forth a projectile; ‘hit/strike/stab’, with the hands or with an instrument; ‘throw’; ‘loosen’; and ‘draw/pull’. All events are highly concrete, and except for ‘loosen’, all events involve strong physical exertion.
- (b) *Intransitive movement.* The verb πίπτω (‘fall’) is used in two ways. It can refer to unintentional movement, as in Euripides, *Phoenician women* 1186 ἐς γῆν δ’ ἔμπυρος **πίπτει** νεκρός (‘and the flaming corpse **falls** to the ground’). When the verb refers to intentional movement, it may be translated as ‘throw oneself (at)’, ‘rush (at)’, or ‘crash (into)’: for example, Euripides, *Medea* 1205 πατήρ δ’ ὁ τλήμων . . . **προσπίτνει** νεκρῷ (‘and the miserable father **throws himself** at the corpse’). In both cases, the verb designates quick, intense movement, and in the case of unintentional movement, violence is often involved (someone falls after being hit).<sup>33</sup>
- (c) *Perception.* The ‘see’ group yields a high present-to-aorist ratio (2.33). For ‘hear’, the ratio is 1; however, 2 out of the 3 aorists are used in a peculiar way. After a character has made a speech, the aorist signals that (an)other character(s) heard it: see, for example, Euripides, *Phoenissae* 1437–9 στέρνων δ’ ἄπο | φύσημ’ ἀνείς †δύσπλητον† Ἐτεοκλῆς ἀνάξ | ἤκουσε μητρός (‘letting out a gasping breath from his chest, lord Eteocles heard his mother’).<sup>34</sup> What

I did include instances of βάλλω (‘throw’ and ‘hit’) where a stream of blood is construed as a projectile, because blood is a material entity (A. *Ag.* 1390; S. *Ant.* 1238; E. *Rh.* 791).

<sup>33</sup> The distribution of 16 presents against 0 aorists is so marked that we may wonder if other factors play a role here. De Jong (1991: 40–1) suggests that ‘[i]diosyncratic usage on the part of Euripides may be a factor’; however, the verb is found three times in the corpus in other authors than Euripides, and here the present is used as well (A. *Pers.* 197; Ar. *Av.* 498; S. *OT* 1262). It might also be suggested that metrical considerations come into play here. The aorist of the verb, ἔπεσε, requires resolution in the iambic trimeter, which is certainly not impossible but somewhat inconvenient. The same is true, incidentally, for βάλλω in the senses ‘throw’ and ‘hit’ (aorist ἔβαλε), which have a combined present-to-aorist ratio of 7 to 1 in Table 2.1. However, the verb πίπτω (‘fall’) is often used with the present for preterite in prose as well, so at least this use must have been considered entirely natural, even if metrical factors may have played a role in drama to some extent. See, e.g., the present for preterite of προσπίπτω (‘throw oneself at’) in Aeschin. 1.62; D. 19.198, 54.8; Th. 2.81.5, 3.108.1, 4.25.9; X. *HG.* 3.2.3, 5.3.6, *An.* 7.1.21. Also, εἰσπίπτω (‘crash into’) in Hdt. 5.15, 9.113; Th. 2.4.5, 2.25.2, 7.84.3; X. *An.* 1.10.1, 7.1.17, *Cyr.* 7.5.29.

<sup>34</sup> The same goes for S. *OC* 1645. Moreover, here the composite verb εἰσακούω is used, which means ‘listen to’ in the sense of ‘obey’.

matters here is the mere fact that Eteocles actually heard the speech. Compare an instance such as Euripides, *Rhesus* 789 κλύω δ' ἐπάρας κρᾶτα μυχθισμόν νεκρῶν ('lifting my head, I **hear** the groaning of men dying'). Here the subject is suddenly confronted with a striking sound. Taking this into account, the present-to-aorist ratio of the 'hear' group will be closer to that of the 'see' group. In both cases, the predilection for the present can be understood in terms of the concreteness of simulated perception.

- (d) *Sound production*. The frequent use of the present for preterite of the verb βοάω ('shout') seems unsurprising 'because of its inherent dramatic character' (Allan [2009: 192]). In terms of concreteness, shouting involves physical exertion (for the agent) and the sound that is produced strongly imposes itself on the senses (of the bystanders).

However, many other verbs designating sound production are never marked with the present for preterite in the corpus. This is true for verbs formed after interjections, verbs that designate less specific noise made by humans or animals and verbs designating noise in general. Examples are οἰμώζω ('cry *oimoi*'), ἀλαλάζω ('cry *alalai*'), ὀτοτύζω ('cry *ototoi*'), εὐφημέω ('cry *euphemei*', 'cry out'), κράζω ('scream'), κλάζω ('scream'), στενάζω ('groan'), θορυβέω ('make noise'), ῥοθέω ('make a rushing noise'), κτυπέω ('resound') and expressions meaning 'clap the hands' (κροτέω/κρούω χεῖρας).

Does this falsify the idea that the predilection of the verb βοάω ('shout') for the present for preterite is due to its dramatic character? Or is the threshold for present tense usage raised for these other verbs by extraneous factors? In my view, the latter explanation is more likely. To begin with, in the one instance where the present is used with a verb similar to the ones listed, the intensity of the sound seems a crucial factor:

- (4) καὶ τοῦδ' ἀπαλλαγέντος ἐν χρόνῳ μακρῷ,  
 ἡ παῖς ὄρᾳται κάνακωκύει πικρῶς  
 ὄρνιθος ὄξυν φθόγγον, ὡς ὅταν κενῆς  
 εὐνῆς νεοσσῶν ὄρφανὸν βλέψη λέχος.

And when after a long time this went away,  
 the girl **is seen** and **cries out** bitterly,  
 with a sound like the piercing note of a bird when she sees  
 her empty nest robbed of her young.

(Sophocles, *Antigone* 422–5; trans. after Lloyd-Jones [1994])

Antigone cries out ‘bitterly’ (πικρῶς), producing a ‘piercing sound’ (ὄξυν φθόγγον).<sup>35</sup> It is probably not a coincidence that the present is used precisely where the character of the sound is particularly salient.<sup>36</sup>

I believe the crucial difference between βοάω (‘shout’) and most of the verbs listed above lies in actionality. Verb phrases of ‘making noise’ are typically of the *activity* type, which means they designate events that can be extended indefinitely. Clear examples are θορυβέω (‘make noise’), ῥοθέω (‘make a rushing noise’). The same is true for verb phrases meaning ‘clap the hands’ (κροτέω/κρούω χεῖρας) and verbs modelled on interjections: cries such as ὄτοτοῖ could be extended and repeated ad libitum (e.g., ὄτοτοτοτοῖ, ὄτοτοῖ ὄτοτοῖ; see the entry in LSJ). The use of the present for preterite is dispreferred with activity verb phrases in the corpus.<sup>37</sup> The verb βοάω (‘shout’), by contrast, is probably more easily understood to designate a single shout. Still, I must admit I do not have a particular explanation for why we do not find the present for preterite with the verbs κράζω (‘scream’) and κλάζω (‘scream’) in the corpus (8 instances).<sup>38</sup>

All in all, I believe the data presented here supports the idea that the odds of the present for preterite being used are increased when the designated event is concrete (concreteness being understood in terms of the involvement of sensorimotor processes) and intense (in terms of the degree of exertion involved in a physical action or the strength of the impression made by a sight or sound).

### 2.2.2 Reference to the Limbs

If an action is explicitly said to involve the use of the hand/arm or foot/leg, then the underlying conceptualisation will be highly concrete. According to the argument made in this chapter, this should raise the odds of the present for preterite being used. This hypothesis was initially based on incidental observations. It then turned out that there were only a few

<sup>35</sup> Compare S. *OC* 1610 ὡς ἀκούει φθόγγον ἐξαίφνης πικρὸν (‘immediately as he **hears** the bitter sound’).

<sup>36</sup> Compare S. *Ant.* 1209–10 τῷ δ’ ἀθλίας ἄσημα **περιβαίνει** βοῆς | ἔρποντι μᾶλλον ἄσσον (‘as he creeps closer, an unintelligible, miserable cry **surrounds** him’). Again, the present is used to mark a distressing sound.

<sup>37</sup> See Section 2.1.1.2, note 24; Introduction, Section I.4.4; Appendix, Section A.2.

<sup>38</sup> We do, however, find the present perfect κέκλαγγεν (‘cries’) referring to the past in A. *Ch.* 535. (This is not in the selected corpus because the boundary between narrative and dialogue is blurred here [525–39].)

instances in total. I have looked at instances of the words χεῖρ ('hand', sometimes 'arm' by extension), ποῦς ('foot'), κῶλον ('leg'), σκέλος ('leg'), γόνυ ('knee'). The rule was that the noun had to be connected to the main verb, either as subject, or as instrumental dative ('with the hand') or as accusative of direct object.

For the word χεῖρ ('hand'), the instrumental dative yields 5 instances of the present against 4 of the aorist.<sup>39</sup> There are some interesting contrastive pairs. Compare Euripides, *Hippolytus* 1188 μάρπτει δὲ χερσὶν ἡνίας ἀπ' ἄντυγος ('he **grabs** the reins from the rim with his hands') with *Phaethon* 172 (Diggle [1970]) τοσαῦτ' ἀκούσας παῖς ἔμαρψεν ἡνίας ('having heard that much, his son grabbed the reins').<sup>40</sup> And again, Sophocles, *Women of Trachis* 923–4 τοσαῦτα φωνήσασα συντόνω χερὶ | **λύει** τὸν αὐτῆς πέπλον ('having said that much, she **loosens** her robe with a swift hand') versus *Oedipus at Colonus* 1597 εἶτ' ἔλυσε δυσπινεῖς στολάς ('subsequently, he loosened his dirty clothes'). The direct object gives us 1 present and 4 aorists.<sup>41</sup> This amounts to a total of 6 presents against 8 aorists; in three instances of the latter group, however, the verb phrase is of the activity type, where the present is dispreferred.<sup>42</sup>

I have found only 6 relevant references to the foot, leg, or knee: 2 present forms and 4 aorists forms.<sup>43</sup> A comparison of the use of the present with that of the aorist will serve to suggest that concreteness is the decisive factor. The two instances of the present are found in the narrative of the second

<sup>39</sup> Present forms: A. *Pers.* 195 διασπαράσσει ('tears apart'); E. *Hec.* 528 αἶρει ('lifts'), *Hipp.* 1188 μάρπτει ('grabs'); S. *Ant.* 429 φέρει ('carries'), *Tr.* 923 λύει ('loosens'). Excluded were E. *Ba.* 1140 λαβοῦσα τυγχάνει ('happens to take'; restrictive relative clause); *Rh.* 770 μετρώ ('measure out'; imperfective aspectual construal, in my view). Aorist forms: E. *Hipp.* 1220 ἤρπασε ('seized'), *IA* 1566 ἔθηκεν ('placed'); S. *Aj.* 729 διεπεραιώθη ('were taken across'), *El.* 713 ἔσεισαν ('shook'). I excluded E. *HF* 949 ἔθεινε ('struck'; ambiguous between aorist and imperfect but probably an imperfect; note the participle θείνων 'striking' in the same line).

<sup>40</sup> The *Phaethon* has been transmitted fragmentarily and is not in my selected corpus. I should point out that further on in the same messenger narrative in the *Hippolytus*, we find the aorist (1220 ἤρπασε ['seized']) accompanied by the instrumental dative χερσὶν ('with the hands').

<sup>41</sup> Present forms: Ar. *Pl.* 689 ὑφείρει ('fastens under'; a highly plausible conjecture, which I have adopted). Aorist forms: E. *Supp.* 720 ἔκρουσα ('struck together'); *Ba.* 109 προσέθεσαν ('placed against'); Ar. *Pl.* 691 ἀνέσπασεν ('pulled back'), 739 ἀνεκρότησα ('clapped').

<sup>42</sup> S. *El.* 713 ἔσεισαν ('shook'); E. *Supp.* 720 ἔκρουσα ('struck together'; with the hands as object, implies repeated clapping); Ar. *Pl.* 739 ἀνεκρότησα ('clapped').

<sup>43</sup> Present form: E. *Ph.* 1391 τίθησι ('places'), 1410 ἀναφέρει ('brings back'). Aorist forms: A. *Ag.* 1385 μεθήκεν ('gave in'); E. *IT* 333 καθέισαν ('sent down'), 1407 ὠρμήθη ('rushed'); *Supp.* 718 ἔτρεψαν ('turned'). At E. *HF* 802, I take the object πόδα ('foot') with the participle. The form χωρεῖ ('moves/moved') in E. *Ph.* 1401 is morphologically ambiguous between a present and an unaugmented imperfect. The phrase ἐπὶ σκέλος ('step by step') seems to favour the latter interpretation.

messenger in Euripides' *Phoenician women*, which tells of the duel between Eteocles and Polyneices. First, Eteocles inadvertently exposes his leg:

- (5) Ἐτεοκλέης δὲ ποδὶ μεταψαίρων πέτρον  
ἴχνους ὑπόδρομον, κῶλον ἐκτὸς ἀσπίδος  
**τίθησι.**

Eteocles, kicking aside with his foot a stone  
that rolled beneath his step, **places** his leg  
outside his shield.

(Euripides, *Phoenician women* 1390–2)

The present τίθησι ('places') designates a concrete movement of the leg. Note also the mention of the foot (ποδὶ ['with his foot']) in the participial clause. The other instance occurs further on, where Eteocles makes a special move:

- (6) ἐξαλλαγείς γὰρ τοῦ παρεστῶτος πόνου,  
λαιὸν μὲν ἐς τοῦπισθεν **ἀναφέρει** πόδα,  
πρόσω τὰ κοῖλα γαστρὸς εὐλαβοῦμενος,  
προβάς δὲ κῶλον δεξιὸν δι' ὀμφαλοῦ  
καθῆκεν ἔγχος σφονδύλοισι τ' ἐνήρμοσεν.

Turning away from the present engagement,  
he **brings** his left foot back,  
keeping an eye on the pit of [the other's] stomach from a distance,  
and stepping forward with his right leg, he sent his spear down  
[his opponent's] navel and fitted it in his spine.

(Euripides, *Phoenician women* 1409–13)

Again, the movement designated with the present ἀναφέρει ('brings') is highly specific.<sup>44</sup>

Now let us contrast the aorists. In Euripides, *Suppliant Women* 718, the phrase is ἔτρεψαν ἐς φυγὴν πόδα ('turned their foot to flight'), which is a poetic periphrasis for 'fled' (compare Section 2.4 on narrative mimesis and grammatical simplicity). No specific motion of the foot is intended. In *Iphigeneia amongst the Taurians* 1407, we read χῶ μὲν τις ἐς θάλασσαν ὠρμήθη ποσίν ('and one rushed to the sea with his feet'). Again, this does not refer to a specific motion. In lines 332–3 of the

<sup>44</sup> For the importance of spatial reference (note ἐς τοῦπισθεν ['back'] in line 1410) to narrative mimesis, see Grethlein and Huitink (2017: 82). Compare Allan et al. (2017) and Allan (2018) on space and immersion. For the following aorist forms (a possible case of *variatio* according to de Jong [1991: 41]), see Section 2.4.7.

same play we read ἐς δὲ γῆν γόνυ | καμάτῳ καθεῖσαν (literally ‘they sent down their knee to the earth in exhaustion’). This is another poetic periphrasis.<sup>45</sup> We may contrast the use of the present in *Hecuba* 11150, where the knee is mentioned in a subordinate clause: ἴζω δὲ κλίνης ἐν μέσῳ κάμψας γόνυ (‘I **sit down** in the middle of the couch, bending my knee’).

In conclusion, a review of instances where the limbs are mentioned supports the argument that the present for preterite is more likely to be used when the designated event is strongly concrete.

### 2.2.3 *First Person versus Third Person*

Comparing tense usage with the first and third person in the corpus of dramatic narrative is problematic because of morphological ambiguity. As I explained in Section 2.1.1.2, I have cut from the data forms that are morphologically ambiguous between the present and the imperfect (see also Introduction, Section 1.4.3). Most of these forms are in the third person (about thirty; see Appendix, Section A.2.2.1). This means that, in the current dataset, the distribution will be skewed so that it will seem that the present is used less often in the third person than it actually is.

There is another aspect to this issue. For a number of individual instances, even if we assume they are present forms, the implicit aspectual construal may still be imperfective. In the following example, we can be relatively certain of this. Heracles, in his madness, has just killed two of his children, and now moves against the third:

- (7) δεύτερον δὲ παῖδ’ ἐλών  
 χωρεῖ τρίτον θῦμ’ ὡς ἐπισφάξων δυοῖν.

Having taken the second child,  
 he **moves** with the intention of slaying a third, another sacrifice on top  
 of the two.

(Euripides, *Heracles* 994–5)

The form χωρεῖ (‘moves’), printed by Diggle with the accentuation of the present tense, is actually morphologically ambiguous: it might also be an imperfect without the augment, (ἐ)χώρει (‘moved’). I think Diggle’s reading is probably right here (see Section 2.6.2). Even so, the implicit

<sup>45</sup> A. *Ag.* 1384–5 is very similar: κὰν δυοῖν οἰμώγμασιν | μεθήκεν αὐτοῦ κῶλα (‘and with two groans his legs gave in’).

Table 2.2 *Tense and person marking*

Category	<i>Present</i>	<i>Aorist</i>	Odds ratio	<i>p</i> -value
First person	51 (37)	65 (79)	1.916	0.002 <sup>a</sup>
Third person	147 (161)	359 (345)		

<sup>a</sup>B = .65 (constant = -.893), standard error = .211.

aspectual construal here is most likely imperfective. The imperfective is typically used with verbs of movement when no destination is specified. With *χωρέω* ('move'), this is true even when a destination *is* specified – in fact, I only found one aorist of this verb in the corpus.<sup>46</sup>

It is hard to make a confident estimate of the number of present forms with perfective aspectual construal in this sample. In at least seven cases, I believe we should probably read the imperfect.<sup>47</sup> Nine of the remaining instances are of the verb *χωρέω* ('move') which, as I just argued, has a predilection for imperfective construal. All in all, I think an estimate of fifteen aoristic present forms among the thirty ambiguous instances of the third person is reasonably generous.

On this assumption, the figures and statistics are listed in Table 2.2 (the numbers between brackets represent the *expected counts*, that is, the numbers we would expect to find if the distribution were completely even). As we can see, the actual number of present forms with first person marking exceeds the number expected under an even distribution; the converse is true for the aorist. The size of the effect is expressed by the odds ratio: the odds of the present being used increase by a factor 1.916 when the verb is in the first person. Finally, the *p*-value represents the probability of finding this distribution by chance. (It should at all times be remembered that this value is not corrected for the total number of tests; see Section 2.1.1.3.) As the odds ratio is substantial and the *p*-value is relatively low, these figures suggest that there is a correlation between present tense usage and first person marking.

<sup>46</sup> For the imperfect with a specified destination, see E. *Hel.* 1548 ἐς ναῦν ἐχώρου ('moved towards the ship'); *Ba.* 759 ἐς σπλ' ἐχώρου ('moved to their arms'), 765 πάλιν δ' ἐχώρου ὅθεν ἐκίνησαν πόδα ('they moved back to [the place] from where they had [initially] moved their feet'). For the aorist, see E. *Heracl.* 835.

<sup>47</sup> These are (I print the reading of the editors) E. *Med.* 1141 κυνεῖ ('kisses'); *El.* 822 ἀπωθεῖ ('pushes away'); *IT* 1395 ὠθεῖ ('pushes'); *Andr.* 1089 τ' ἐχώρει ('moved'; ambiguous with τε χωρεῖ), 1096 τοῦδ' ἐχώρει ('moved'; ambiguous with τοῦδε χωρεῖ); *S. Ph.* 371 κυρεῖ ('happens to be'); *OC* 1626 καλεῖ ('calls').

I should note that the connection between first person marking and memory is problematic due to the nature of the texts studied here. It is the playwright who writes the text, but the memory belongs to the character; moreover, the actual speaker of the words, the actor, has no actual memory of the narrated events. The hypothesis concerning tense and person marking put forward here is based on the assumption that art imitates life and that the language sense of the playwright will make his characters' speech like actual speech. If this premise is accepted, the results presented here lend support to the idea that vividness of memory positively correlates with the use of the present for preterite (compare Park et al. [2011]).

#### 2.2.4 *Conclusion*

I have argued in this section that the use of the present for preterite is positively correlated with narrative mimesis in terms of mental simulation: the higher the activation strength of the simulation, the more the conceptualisation will feel like actual experience and the more the conceptual distinction between the actual past events and the present simulation will be blurred.

This idea produced two specific hypotheses. First is the idea that the concreteness (involvement of actual sensorimotor processes) and intensity (involvement of strong physical effort or striking audio-visual components) of the designated event increase the odds of the present for preterite being used. I have discussed tense usage with certain verb types (Section 2.2.1) and in descriptions that make explicit reference to the limbs (Section 2.2.2) to corroborate this claim. Second, I suggested that the simulation will be stronger when the speaker was actively involved in the described events, and thus the odds of the present for preterite being used in these cases will be increased. This idea is supported by the corpus data (Section 2.2.3).

### 2.3 **Depiction**

In this section, we move from mental simulation to physical simulation or 'depiction' (Clark [2016]). In this form of narrative mimesis, the narrator assigns a portion of the immediate surroundings to function as a simulation space, which means that any action performed in this space may be understood to represent an action in the actual past event space.<sup>48</sup> I will

<sup>48</sup> See (with reference to gesture) Liddell and Metzger (1998); Liddell (2003). Clark (2016) speaks of a 'proximal scene' and a 'distal scene' in this connection.



describe four aspects of depiction here. As I am dealing with written texts, not all of these will be relevant to my investigation, but I want to give as complete a picture as I can of the different factors potentially influencing tense-switching with an eye to other research.<sup>49</sup>

First mention goes to *iconic gesture*. I have already discussed this in Chapter 1 (Section 1.6). Let us reconsider a portion of Kramer's narrative from the *Seinfeld* episode I discussed there:

- (8) and as I **(a)m trying** to get Moose Skowron off one of my teammates, you know, somebody **pulls** me from behind, you know, and I turned around and I popped him.

Kramer's narrative here is accompanied by gestures: at *pulls*, for example, Kramer grabs his own coat by the neck and violently pulls it back. This makes the described event immediately visible to the addressees.

Here I would like to make an additional point with respect to the potential relevance of gesture to tense-switching. According to Hostetter and Alibali (2008), gesture is *simulated action*, which means that it is the overt realisation of a mental simulation. They describe the process as follows:

Simulation involves activating premotor action states; this activation has the potential to spread to motor areas and to be realised as overt action. When this spreading activation occurs, a gesture is born. (Hostetter and Alibali [2008: 503])

If gesture production is correlated with simulation strength, then a way to test the hypothesis that present for preterite usage is correlated with simulation strength (Section 2.2) is to look for correlations between gesture production and present tense usage. Such research has in fact been conducted, but as far as I have been able to find, no results have been published.<sup>50</sup>

The other three aspects of depiction I discuss here involve sound. One aspect is *stress and intonation*. For example, in Kramer's narrative in the *Seinfeld* episode, we find that words are stressed to express the intensity of the described actions: *Well he THROWS down his bat, he comes RACING up to the mound*. This type of depiction may be translated into written

<sup>49</sup> For the relevance of performance features to tense-switching, see Wolfson (1978 etc.); Fleischman (1986), (1990: 8–9).

<sup>50</sup> Elena Nicoladis presented a paper at the 2015 International Cognitive Linguistics Conference that reported on a study to see if restricting people's gestures would influence their tense usage. For the relationship between gesture and *aspect*, see Parrill et al. (2013); Wu (2018).

texts by capitalisation (as I have just done), but this does not apply to Classical Greek.

The second type of vocal depiction is *sound symbolism*. Sound-symbolic words mimic sensory, mental and emotional experiences through their phonological structure.<sup>51</sup> Such words do not form a substantial part of the vocabulary of European languages, but they are pervasive in, for instance, Japanese.<sup>52</sup> Examples are *gorogoro suru* (lit. ‘make *gorogoro*’, that is, ‘growl’, ‘rumble’, et cetera) or *dokidoki suru* ‘be nervous’, where *dokidoki* symbolises the sound of a beating heart. Perniss et al. (2010) point out that such expressions ‘are used frequently in everyday conversation and are especially frequent in narratives and story-telling, to help bring to life events *through vivid depiction and enactment*’ (my italics). The effect of sound-symbolism is that aspects of the narrated experiences are recreated in the present so that they become immediately perceptible to the addressees.

This type of depiction is found in the Classical Greek corpus.<sup>53</sup> It is difficult, however, to establish a correlation between sound symbolism and tense usage. Sound-symbolic words differ in their degree of iconicity, and it is impossible to tell to what extent the symbolism will have been actually registered by native speakers in each case. Moreover, the question is how exactly the correlation should be measured. One option would be to hypothesise that sound-symbolic verbs tend to be marked with the present for preterite more often than expected by chance. However, the most obviously sound-symbolic words are ones that designate sound production (e.g., ἀλαλαίω [‘cry *alalai*’]) and these are almost never marked with the present, as explained in Section 2.2.1. On the other hand, βοάω (‘shout’) is onomatopoeic as well (see the relevant entry in Beekes [2010]) and has a remarkable present-to-aorist ratio (10 to 4). Not much can be made of these contrasting findings; a more promising approach might be to look for correlations between the overall frequency of onomatopoeic words and the ratio of present to aorist forms in larger stretches of narrative discourse.

Finally, *direct speech representation* has been considered the paradigm of narrative mimesis since antiquity and has often been connected to the

<sup>51</sup> When sounds are used to convey non-auditory experiences, we are dealing with *cross-modal iconicity*: Ahlner and Zlatev (2010); Elleström (2017).

<sup>52</sup> See, e.g., Sugahara and Hamano (2015). See Perniss et al. (2010) for references to other languages.

<sup>53</sup> Grethlein and Huitink (2017: 78) discuss the use of ‘phonetic mimesis’ in a Homeric example. See also Allan et al. (2017: 36, 41).

present for preterite.<sup>54</sup> Through the utterance of words that were spoken, or thought, in the past, the narrator makes this speech or thought directly accessible to the audience. The effect is heightened when the narrator acts like the represented character, mimicking their way of speaking and gesturing. As I argued in Chapter 1, Section 1.6, this is what Kramer does in the final part of his narrative:

- (9) Then Hank Bauer, you know, he'(i)s **screaming** 'Mickey, Mickey, what have you done with Mickey, you killed Mickey!'

Kramer assumes the role of Hank Bauer, using a different voice and speaking with great agitation. The use of the present tense to introduce the speech representation reflects the vivid character of the narrative simulation here.

With the texts in our corpus, it is of course impossible to tell if a speaker was supposed to mimic the represented character in this way. The following example is suggestive, however. The context is as follows: The speaker had lost a lawsuit to Theophemus and was to pay him a sum of money. He was, however, unable to meet the term date, as he had recently been elected trierarch and had been forced to invest money into the ship's preparations. So he asked Theophemus for a little delay:

- (10) ἐδεόμην δ' αὐτοῦ ἀναβαλέσθαι τὴν ὑπερμερίαν, ἕως ἂν τὴν ναῦν ἀποστείλω. ὁ δὲ ῥαδίως μοι καὶ ἀκάκως **ἀποκρίνεται**. 'οὐδὲν κωλύει,' ἔφη· 'ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴν τὴν ναῦν ἀποστείλης, πόριζε καὶ ἐμοί.'

I asked him to postpone the due date to after I would have dispatched the ship. He **answers** me in an easy-going and guileless manner: 'Nothing to prevent it,' said he, 'but when you have dispatched the ship, also bring the money to me.'

(Demosthenes, *Against Evergus and Mnesibulus* [47] 50)

The present ἀποκρίνεται ('answers') highlights an act of deception. For when, some time later, the speaker had procured the money and asked Theophemus to accompany him to the bank, Theophemus instead invaded the speaker's property and confiscated his goods. The shamelessness of Theophemus' answer here is emphasised by the ironic characterisation of his speech (ῥαδίως καὶ ἀκάκως ['in an easy-going and guileless manner']). In my view, it is not unlikely that at this point the speaker

<sup>54</sup> Plato, *Republic* 392c–4c; compare, e.g., Chatman (1978); Clark and Gerrig (1990); Clark (2016); with specific reference to tense-switching, Fleischman (1990: 66); Chafe (1994: 218); Allan (2009: 177); Bonilla (2011); Thoma (2011); Willi (2017: 246–9).

mockingly imitated Theophemus' way of speaking to bring home this point even stronger.

In Section 2.3.1, I will present data regarding tense usage with speech-reporting verbs. It is also conceivable, however, that direct speech representation influences tense-switching in the broader context, as direct speech representation heightens the overall mimetic quality of the narrative. The following case is interesting in this connection. Here Polynices, dying, addresses his mother:

- (11) 'Ξυνάρμοσον δὲ βλέφαρά μου τῇ σῇ χειρί,  
 μήτηρ' – **τίθησι** δ' αὐτὸς ὀμμάτων ἔπι –  
 'καὶ χαίρειτ' ἤδη γὰρ με περιβάλλει σκότος.'

'Fit my eyelids together with your hands,  
 mother' – and he **places** them on his eyes himself –  
 'and farewell: for a shadow surrounds me already.'

(Euripides, *Phoenician women* 1451–3)

The present form *τίθησι* ('places') has mimetic qualities in itself: it designates a concrete action that, in this context, is full of pathos. But the mimetic effect is strengthened, in my view, by the fact that the description here is inserted within direct speech representation. We are already in the mimetic mode, as we are listening to Polynices' last words; this primes us to visualise the event described in the parenthesis.

### 2.3.1 Speech-Reporting Verbs

Let us now consider the data from the corpus with respect to speech-reporting verbs. To begin, I hypothesise that verbs introducing direct speech have higher odds of being marked with the present than those that do not.<sup>55</sup>

The results, listed in Table 2.3, do not support the hypothesis. The odds of the present being used are in fact lower with verbs introducing direct speech than with verbs that do not; however, the effect is relatively small (odds ratio 0.716) and statistically highly uncertain ( $p = 0.213$ ).

In retrospect, a problem with this hypothesis is that the verbs in the baseline condition are entirely heterogeneous: some have a strong predilection for the present for preterite, while for others, the opposite is true

<sup>55</sup> I have included cases where the verb also governs an object. For example, in *S. Ant.* 1210–11, the sentence *οὐμώξας δ' ἔπος | ἴησι δυσσθηγήτων* ('wailing, he sends forth words full of bitter lament'), is followed by direct speech representation.

Table 2.3 *Tense and direct speech representation*

Category	<i>Present</i>	<i>Aorist</i>	Odds ratio	<i>p</i> -value
Introducing direct speech	21 (26)	65 (60)	0.716	0.213 <sup>a</sup>
Baseline	162 (157)	359 (364)		

<sup>a</sup>B = -.334 (constant = -.796), standard error = .268.

(Section 2.2.1). It may be that the odds of the present being used in the case of verbs introducing direct speech is relatively high with respect to some verb groups but low with respect to others. Still, we might have expected verbs introducing direct speech to rank very high on this scale due to the strongly mimetic quality of direct quotation, but this is not what we find.

Whether the present for preterite is used seems to be determined by the character of the speech and its function in the context. Most typically, the present marks the speech of characters who are indignant or distressed. An example will serve to illustrate the point. In Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, Neoptolemus tells Philoctetes a made-up story of what happened when he arrived at the Greek camp in Troy. Agamemnon and Menelaus told Neoptolemus that the weapons of his father Achilles had been given to Odysseus (363 εἶπον ['said']). Neoptolemus reacts with indignation (368 λέγω ['say']). Odysseus responds that the Atreids were right in their decision (371 εἶπε ['said']). When Neoptolemus starts abusing the leaders (374–6, no direct speech), Odysseus responds with a jab of his own (378 ἠμείψατο ['answered']). Only Neoptolemus' first speech is marked with the present, and a look at the actual text makes clear why:

- (12) κἀγὼ κδακρύσας εὐθύς **ἐξανίσταμαι**  
 ὀργῇ βαρεῖα, καὶ καταλήσας **λέγω**,  
 'ὦ σκέτλι, ἦ'τολήσατ' ἀντ' ἐμοῦ τι  
 δοῦναι τὰ τεύχη τὰμά, πρὶν μαθεῖν ἐμοῦ;'

And I, breaking out in tears, immediately **stand up from my seat**  
 with heavy anger, and pained I **say**:  
 'Wretched man, did you actually dare to give my arms  
 to someone else, without asking me?'

(Sophocles, *Philoctetes* 367–70)

The narrative here has a markedly mimetic character, which stands in contrast to the other speech introductions. The speech introduction is

preceded by a main clause denoting sudden (εὐθύς ['immediately']) and concrete bodily movement (ἐξανίσταμαι ['stand up from my seat']). Moreover, Neoptolemus emphasises his emotional distress at this point: he 'broke out in tears' (ἐκδακρύσας) and felt 'heavy anger' (ὄργῃ βαρείᾳ) and 'pain' (καταλήσας). Finally, the fact that the subject is the speaker is also an important factor (Section 2.2.3).<sup>56</sup>

A more focused contrast is that between verbs introducing direct speech with those introducing indirect speech: this zooms in purely on the mimetic qualities of the reported speech.<sup>57</sup> Here we are confronted with some difficulties. First, with indirect speech, there are 0 present forms against 9 aorist forms.<sup>58</sup> While this seems telling in itself, a count of zero makes it impossible to calculate a meaningful odds ratio and *p*-value in logistic regression.

Also, there is the problem of morphological ambiguity (compare Section 2.2.1). A number of verbs that are ambiguous between the present and the imperfect in the third person singular happen to belong to verbs that introduce speech. Five of these introduce direct speech; for three of these it is reasonable, in my view, to suppose that the tense is in fact present, based on present tense usage in the immediate context. An example is found in the messenger narrative in Sophocles' *Antigone*, where the messenger tells how Antigone was found dead and Haemon killed himself. As Creon enters the tomb, he hears a terrible shout, and reacts by crying out (1210–11): οἰμώξας δ' ἔπος | ἦησι δυσθρήνητον ('wailing, he **sends forth** words full of bitter lament'). This is followed by direct speech. The present

<sup>56</sup> Another telling case is found in Euripides' *Alcestis* (compare de Jong [1991: 41–2]). A servant narrates how Alcestis prepares for her death on the appointed day. In this narrative, Alcestis makes two speeches: one to the hearth-goddess, asking her to take care of her children, and one where she says farewell to her marriage bed. The first speech is marked with the aorist (162 κατηύξατο ['prayed']), the second with the present (176 λέγει ['says']). The difference reflects a transition in the scene. In the first part, Alcestis retains full composure: ἀκλαυτος ἀστένακτος, οὐδὲ τοῦπιόν | κακὸν μεθίστη χρωτὸς εὐειδῆ φύσιν ('not weeping, nor groaning, nor did the coming evil cause the natural beauty of her skin to change'; 173–4). But when she enters her bedchamber, *at that point* (176 ἐνταῦθα δῆ, a typical turn-marking phrase – see Chapter 3, Section 3.3.4) she starts crying (ἐδάκρυσε ['cried']). Now she finally gives in to her grief and delivers a speech that is full of pathos (evidenced, among other things, by the personification of her marriage bed). I discuss some further examples in the case study of E. *HF* 963–1012 (Section 2.6.2).

<sup>57</sup> Indirect speech representation is also mimetic to some degree, as it retains some of the verbal qualities of the actual report (as observed by Rimmon-Kenan [1983: 109]).

<sup>58</sup> I have counted clauses introduced by ὅτι ('that') or ὡς ('that'); declarative infinitive constructions ('accusative and infinitive'; at S. *Tr.* 775–6, I have taken the infinitive to be implicitly understood); indirect questions introduced by εἰ ('if') or question words (only one instance, S. *Tr.* 774). Dynamic infinitive constructions were excluded (e.g., E. *Ion* 1193 πᾶσι τ' ἐκσπένδειν λέγει ['and he tells all to pour it out']); see Rijksbaron (2002: 97–8) for the distinction between the declarative and the dynamic infinitive.

Table 2.4 *Tense and speech representation*

Category	<i>Present</i>	<i>Aorist</i>	Odds ratio	<i>p</i> -value
Direct speech	24 (22,5)	65 (66,5)	3.323	0.267 <sup>a</sup>
Indirect speech	1 (2,5)	9 (7,5)		

<sup>a</sup>B = 1.201 (constant = -2.197), standard error = 1.081.

form here marks the speech of a distressed character (see above) and is the fourth in a series.<sup>59</sup> When Creon enters the tomb, seeing his son embracing a dead Antigone, he acts as follows:

(13) ὁ δ' ὡς ὄρᾳ σφε, στυγνὸν οἰμῶξας ἔσω  
**χωρεῖ** πρὸς αὐτῶ κἀνακωκύσας **καλεῖ**.  
 'ὦ τλῆμον, οἷον ἔργον εἶργασαι.'

As he sees them, with a gloomy wail  
 he **moves** inside towards them and, wailing aloud, **calls out**:  
 'O wretched one, what deed have you done?'

(Sophocles, *Antigone* 1226–8)

To my mind, there need be little doubt that both *χωρεῖ* ('moves') and *καλεῖ* ('calls out'), both of which are morphologically ambiguous, are in fact present forms. This fits the intensity of the overall narrative, and with respect to the latter form, the parallel with the present *ἵησι* ('sends forth') in line 1211 is strong.<sup>60</sup>

One ambiguous form may be considered to introduce indirect speech, although it is problematic in several respects.<sup>61</sup> We may include it in the data for the sake of removing the 0 count for present tense and indirect speech, so that we may run a regression analysis. Based on these premises, the results are as listed in Table 2.4.

The effect is large (odds ratio 3.323) but statistically barely meaningful ( $p = 0.267$ ). The obvious problem is that there are so few cases of indirect speech representation in the corpus.

<sup>59</sup> After 1207 *κλύει* ('hears'), 1208 *σημαίνει* ('signals'), 1209 *περιβαίνει* ('surrounds').

<sup>60</sup> Similar considerations apply to E. *El.* 780 *αὐτεῖ* ('calls'; Aegisthus' speech is marked with the present *ἐννέπει* ['says'] in 783 and 790) and E. *El.* 830 *ἀνιστορεῖ* ('asks'; following the unambiguous present form *σκυθράζει* ['becomes angry']). More uncertain are S. *Tr.* 796 *καλεῖ* ('calls') and S. *OC* 1626 *καλεῖ* ('calls'; this seems to be iterative, *pace* Rijksbaron [2006: 144]).

<sup>61</sup> S. *OT* 1245 *καλεῖ* ('calls'). The clause of indirect speech is syntactically dependent on a participial clause; moreover, the temporal value of the form is debated (imperfect according to Rijksbaron [2006: 139]. Finglass [2018] ad loc. disagrees; admittedly, Rijksbaron's argument on the basis of 'decisiveness' is not strong).

## 2.3.2 Conclusion

Of the four modes of depiction discussed in this section (gesture, stress and intonation, sound symbolism and direct speech representation), only direct speech representation was relevant to the present investigation. There is no evidence that direct speech representation increases the odds of the present for preterite being used with the reporting verb in comparison to other verbs. Comparing direct speech representation to indirect speech representation does yield an effect, but this is statistically highly uncertain. However, certain specific examples suggest that mimesis in terms of the character of the reported speech (mimicry: [10]; intensity: [12], [13]) does play a role in present for preterite usage.

I close this section by noting some peculiar tendencies pertaining to tense usage and certain speech-introducing formulae outside the selected corpus. The first type is found in Herodotus' *Histories* (compare Eriksson [1943: 12]). In a number of dialogue passages, Herodotus uses speech introductions without a connective particle ('asyndeton'), which is uncommon in Classical Greek. In these formulae, the present is the tense of choice. To take the case of the verb ἀμείβεσθαι ('answer'), we find 12 instances of the present with asyndeton against 1 imperfect (7.16.2; no relevant aorist forms). The verb always stands at the beginning of the clause, for example: ἀμείβεται Κροῖσος τοῖσδε ('Croesus answers with the following [words]'; 1.38.1).<sup>62</sup> Sometimes, there is only the verb of speaking and the name of the speaker: ἀμείβεται Κροῖσος ('Croesus answers'; 1.40.1).<sup>63</sup> Finally, there may be anaphoric reference to the words of the previous speaker: ἀμείβεται πρὸς ταῦτα Δαρεῖος ('to that Darius answers'; 3.140.4).<sup>64</sup> In my view, the absence of a connective particle here is a sign of the narrator trying to minimalise his presence and make the characters 'speak for themselves' as much as possible (see Section 2.4 on 'mimetic' grammar). Moreover, this use tends to occur in highly salient dialogues, such as Croesus' tragic dialogue with his son (1.38.1, 1.39.1, 1.40.1) or the so-called constitutional debate by the Persians who are planning to overthrow the government (3.134.6, 3.140.4). These are fitting contexts for a mimetic, involving representation of what was said (compare Section 2.5.1 on communicative dynamism).

My second observation concerns the verb φημί ('say'), the standard verb in *inquit*-formulae (i.e., where the reporting verb follows words of the

<sup>62</sup> Compare 1.39.1, 1.120.4, 3.72.2, 3.85.2, 7.50.1, 7.237.1.

<sup>63</sup> Compare 1.42.1, 3.134.6.

<sup>64</sup> Compare 7.52.1.



speech representation: ‘*What, said he, ‘do you think?’*’). In the plays of Menander, the use of the present instead of the preterite is almost a rule with this verb in narrative.<sup>65</sup> I reproduce part of example (1) cited in Section 2.1 to illustrate this use:

- (14) ἤκω τι **φημί** ‘πρός σε, πάτερ, ἰδεῖν τί σε  
 σπεύδων ὑπὲρ σοῦ πράγμα’· <ὁ δ’> εὐθύς, ἀνόσιε  
 ἄνθρωπέ, **φησιν**, ‘εἰς τὸ χωρίον δέ μου  
 ἦκεις <σύ> τί μαθών;’

‘I have,’ **say** I, ‘come to you, father, to see you  
 about some serious matter concerning you.’  
 But he immediately – ‘Unholy man,’ **says** he, ‘have you come to  
 my land? What’s your problem?’

(Menander, *The misanthrope* 107–10)

The practice of Aristophanes mirrors that of Menander: I have found three instances of the present for preterite of φημί (‘say’) in *inquit*-formulae, and 0 of the imperfect.<sup>66</sup> We do not find this in other genres: in tragedy, the verb is hardly used at all, and never with the present for preterite; in historiography, the verb is common, but it is never used with the present for preterite; and in Attic rhetoric, the verb is again common, but there are only three instances with the present for preterite (all in *inquit*-formulae).<sup>67</sup> This suggests that the phenomenon is a colloquialism and that tense-switching may be more sensitive to direct speech representation in natural than in artificial narrative.

## 2.4 Linguistic Construal

As I explained in the introduction to this chapter, one interpretation of the contrast between diegesis and mimesis is in terms of description versus depiction as different modes of communication. Depiction is to act out a scene by audio-visual means, as explained in Section 2.3. Description, on

<sup>65</sup> *Dys.* 117, 119; *Epit.* 261, 267; *Mis.* 439; *Pk.* 319; *Sik.* 13, 205, 224 (probably; the text is mutilated), 268; *Theoph.* 18. At *Sam.* 245 and *Sik.* 260, the verb precedes the entire speech. The imperfect is found at *Dys.* 538.

<sup>66</sup> *Pax* 76; *Lys.* 393, 396 (these instances are not in the selected corpus). Aristophanes does, however, use the preterite in proper introductions (where the verb precedes the entire speech report), e.g., *Nub.* 70, 1396; *Ec.* 403.

<sup>67</sup> *Lys.* 32.13; *D.* 56.12, 56.14. The function of the present tense seems to be to add rhetorical impact to a report of something the opponent has said that is particularly outrageous. (At *D.* 56.12 and 56.14, it marks proposals of the speaker’s opponent which the speaker considers to be illegal.)

the other hand, is the use of conventional, arbitrary symbols ‘to denote things categorically’ (Clark [2016: 324]). This distinction is rooted in the axiom of the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign, which has dominated the Western linguistic tradition up to recent times (see, e.g., Meir and Tkachman [2014]). It is, however, problematic, as linguistic description can be depictive as well.<sup>68</sup> What I argue in this section is that conventional linguistic discourse can be mimetic in so far as it is construed in such a way that the activity of processing the discourse becomes analogous to the activity of processing actual experience.

In rhetoric and stylistics, iconic effects in linguistic structure have been noted since antiquity. I illustrate this with an observation by the Classical rhetorician who wrote the treatise *On style* (περὶ Ἑρμηνείας):

- (15) γίνοιτο δ’ ἂν ποτε καὶ βραχέος [sc. καιρός], οἷον ἦτοι μικρόν τι ἡμῶν λεγόντων, ὡς ὁ Ξενοφῶν φησιν, ὅτι ἀφίκοντο οἱ Ἕλληνες ἐπὶ τὸν Τηλεβόαν ποταμόν· ‘οὗτος δὲ ἦν μέγας μὲν οὐ, καλὸς δέ.’ τῇ γὰρ μικρότητι καὶ ἀποκοπῇ τοῦ ῥυθμοῦ συνανεφάνη καὶ ἡ μικρότης τοῦ ποταμοῦ καὶ χάρις.

It may also be appropriate to use a small clause, such as when we talk about small things, as when Xenophon says that the Greeks arrived at the river Teleboas: ‘This river was not big, but beautiful [nevertheless].’ For through the brevity and abruptness of the rhythm, the smallness and charm of the river appears.

(Demetrius [?] *On style* 6)

By describing the river Teleboas with short clauses that end abruptly, Xenophon, according to the rhetorician, makes the character of the river ‘appear’ (συνανεφάνη). In 121 he says, speaking of the same passage, that Xenophon ‘almost shows us a small river’ (μόνον οὐκ ἐπέδειξεν ἡμῖν μικρὸν ποταμόν).<sup>69</sup> In other words, Xenophon is able to depict what he describes, not by audio-visual means as such but by the way the linguistic construal influences our processing of the conveyed conceptual content.<sup>70</sup>

Such phenomena are not restricted to poetry, rhetoric or other artificial forms of language. It turns out that iconic principles are involved in the very

<sup>68</sup> This is already illustrated by sound-symbolic words, which I discussed in Section 2.3: on the one hand, these words bear a conventional linguistic meaning, and on the other, they depict what they describe through their phonological qualities.

<sup>69</sup> The discussion in 121 makes it clear that the ‘shortness’ (μικρότης) refers to the clause structure (121: τῇ . . . βραχύτητι τῆς συνθέσεως [‘the brevity of the composition’]). The ‘abruptness’ lies in the ending of the second clause in the connective particle δέ (τῇ ἀπολήξει τῇ εἰς τὸ δέ).

<sup>70</sup> For more on iconicity and Classical Greek ideas on language and rhetoric, see Nijk (2018). For other discussions of iconicity in literature (and other media), see, e.g., Zirker et al. (2017).

structure of grammar, from the phonological level to the discourse level. The function of these principles seems to be to facilitate language acquisition and language processing.<sup>71</sup> For example, the *quantity principle* states that morphological complexity corresponds to conceptual complexity. An example is the phenomenon of reduplication, which generally signals plurality, distributivity, continuation or something similar: for example, Japanese *hito* ‘person’ versus *hitobito* ‘people’.<sup>72</sup> Another principle is that of *proximity*: the distance between words typically signals conceptual distance. Violation of this principle (*hyperbaton*, i.e., when words that are closely related are removed from each other) strains our working memory.<sup>73</sup> On the discourse level, there is the *sequential order principle*, which states that the order of clauses normally mirrors the temporal order of the designated events. Zwaan and Yaxley (2003: 954) report on some studies which show that ‘violations of such temporal iconicity affect online processing’: a sentence such as *Before the manager went to the meeting, he made a phone call* presents more difficulty than one that follows the temporal order of the actual events (Mandler [1986]; Münte, Schiltz and Kutas [1998]).

My point is that linguistic representations differ in the degree to which their structure reflects the character of actual experience and that this is a measure of narrative mimesis. I will discuss seven aspects in this section, moving from the level of the discourse to the level of the verb. I will first give an overview of these aspects and then present evidence from the corpus pertaining to each in particular.<sup>74</sup> To illustrate my points, I will refer to the following passage from Kramer’s ‘fantasy baseball camp’ narrative:

- (16) and as I **m trying** to get Moose Skowron off one of my teammates,  
       you know,  
       somebody **pulls** me from behind, you know,  
       and I **turned** around  
       and I **popped** him.  
       I **look** down  
       and whoa man, it’s Mickey!

<sup>71</sup> See Haiman (1980); Givón (1991); Perniss et al. (2010); Perniss and Vigliocco (2014); Dingemanse et al. (2015).

<sup>72</sup> On reduplication and iconicity, see Fischer (2011).

<sup>73</sup> On the effect of hyperbaton, see, e.g., pseudo-Longinus, *On the sublime* 22, in particular 22.3–4, where he calls it ‘dangerous’ (note κίνδυνον, ἀκροσφαλεῖ, although the point is that it is highly effective when well handled).

<sup>74</sup> I take it for granted that the present for preterite is dispreferred with negations and in clauses that violate the sequential order principle (Section 2.1.1.2), so I will not discuss these aspects here. See Appendix, Sections A.1.1 and A.1.6.

- (a) *Relation between discourse time and story time.* Mimesis is associated with a scenic narrative tempo, where the time it takes to process the narrative comes close to the time it took for the original events to actually occur.<sup>75</sup> In example (16), almost all clauses designate punctual events (*pulls, turned, popped, look*) and this is reflected by the brevity of the clauses. The progressive *I'm trying* designates an ongoing process, and the corresponding clause is a little longer.
- (b) *Discourse connection.* Mimesis is associated with simple discourse connections.<sup>76</sup> Complex discourse connections require an overview of the larger sequence of events, a perspective that is not available when we experience events as actual observers. In example (16), we find either simple 'and-coordination' (Bonifazi et al. [2016: IV.2, §1]) or no connective particle ('asyndeton': *I look down*).
- (c) *Sentence complexity.* According to Toolan (1988: 126), diegetic narration is characterised by 'more evident ranking or hierarchical ordering of event-presentation'. Such ranking is easy from a retrospective viewpoint, but in actual experience, it is harder to consider certain events occurring in a sequence to be backgrounded with respect to others. Therefore, 'diegesis is hypotactic while mimesis is paratactic' (Toolan [1988: 126]).<sup>77</sup> Kramer generally adheres to this principle throughout his narrative, but there is a slight violation in the subordination of the clause *as I'm trying to get Moose Skowron off one of my teammates*. Contrast the following example from Classical Greek:

(17) καὶ **τυγχάνω** τε κλῆθρ' ἀνασπαστοῦ πύλης  
χαλῶσα, καὶ με φθόγγος οἰκείου κακοῦ  
**βάλλει** δι' ὠτῶν.

And I **happen** to be loosening the bolts of the gate  
to open it, and a sound of disaster for the house  
**strikes** me through the ears.

(Sophocles, *Antigone* 1186–8)

As in (16), the clauses describe a punctual event cutting into a durative one, but in (17), the clauses are paratactic. In this respect, the grammar in (17) is more mimetic than in (16).

<sup>75</sup> E.g., Linhares-Dias (2006: 5); Kuzmičova (2012b: 28–9); Allan et al. (2017: 41); Grethlein and Huitink (2017: 73).

<sup>76</sup> Kroon (2002); Allan (2009), (2011a).

<sup>77</sup> See also Allan (2007). From the perspective of language development, hypotaxis is associated with linguistic sophistication: Berman (1988: 485–6).

- (d) *Information status of the verb.* In mimetic narrative, the verb typically carries the weight of the assertion, because the *actions* are central to the narrative development. In Classical Greek, the information status of the verb influences its position in the sentence (e.g., Matic [2003]), so that a correlation between tense usage and verb position is expected (compare Kroon [2002: 195] who suggests that ‘frequent initial position of the verb’ is a marker of the ‘immediate narrative mode’ in Latin).
- (e) *Voice.* The most direct way to construe an event is using the active voice; the passive voice is a sign of narratorial mediation (Allan [2011a: 40–1]). In (16), Kramer might have said *I’m pulled from behind*, but this seems less natural than *Someone pulls me from behind*.
- (f) *Number.* Use of the plural typically implies temporal compression (the action of a group will take more time than that of a single individual) and/or abstraction (distinct events are grouped together into a single whole).<sup>78</sup> In example (16), only the singular is used.
- (g) *Verbal simplicity.* Given that there are many different expressions to describe a certain event, some will be more straightforward and others more elaborate, poetic, figured or otherwise less ordinary. Mimesis fits a style that, as the ancient critic Dionysius of Halicarnassus called it (*On Lysias* 3) ‘expresses concepts through proper, common and ordinary language’ (ἡ διὰ τῶν κυρίων τε καὶ κοινῶν καὶ ἐν μέσῳ κειμένων ὀνομάτων ἐκφέρουσα τὰ νοούμενα <ἐρμηνεία>).<sup>79</sup>

Let me discuss these aspects in more detail.

#### 2.4.1 Discourse Time and Story Time

The relation between discourse time and story time is hard to quantify because both variables are elusive.<sup>80</sup> The time it takes for something to be read or spoken is not fixed. Story time can sometimes be determined with certainty, when the time it took for something to occur is made explicit, or when the event is punctual (e.g., ‘sneeze’). Most of the time, however,

<sup>78</sup> Allan (2011a: 42), referring to Wärvik (2004), associates the singular with the ‘immediate mode’ through the notion of ‘foregrounding’.

<sup>79</sup> Verbal simplicity has been related to mental simulation as well: see Troschianko (2014b: 23), as discussed in Section 2.5.

<sup>80</sup> Compare Grethlein and Huitink (2017: 78).

the exact duration of the designated events is uncertain. Given these difficulties, I will not present a quantitative analysis but only discuss some illustrative passages.

When the narrated events are punctual and follow closely upon one another (typically with a causal relationship between them), the present for preterite seems to be preferred (compare von Fritz [1949: 186–7] on a passage in the Roman poet Catullus). This is illustrated by example (3), which I reproduce here:

- (18) κἀγὼ νομίσας ὄρθρον ἐχώρουν Ἄλιμουστάδε, κάρτι προκύπτω  
 ἔξω τείχους καὶ λωποδύτης παίει ῥοπάλω με τὸ νῶτον·  
 κἀγὼ πίπτω μέλλω τε βοᾶν, ὁ δ' ἀπέβλισε θοιμάτιόν μου.

I {thought} it was morning and set off for Halimus. And I just **stoop forward** out of the city walls and a mugger **hits** me in the back with a club. I **fall** down, and I'm **about to** shout for help, but he extracted my coat.

(Aristophanes, *Birds* 496–8)

The moment the speaker's head emerges outside the city walls (προκύπτω ['stoop forward']), he is struck (παίει ['hits']); this immediately causes him to fall (πίπτω ['fall']). We may assume that the speaker's intention to shout (μέλλω τε βοᾶν ['I am about to shout']) follows immediately.

A similar case is the following (compare [17]):

- (19) καὶ τυγχάνω τε κληῖθρ' ἀνασπαστοῦ πύλης  
 χαλῶσα, καί με φθόγγος οἰκείου κακοῦ  
 βάλλει δι' ὠτων· ὑπτία δὲ κλίνομαι  
 δείσασα πρὸς δμωᾶσι κάπποπλήσσομαι.

And I **happen** to be loosening the bolts of the gate to open it, and a sound of disaster for the house **strikes** me through the ears; struck with fear, I **recline** into the arms of my slaves, and I **faint**.

(Sophocles, *Antigone* 1186–9)

As Eurydice is loosening the bolts of the gate, she is struck by a sound (βάλλει ['strikes']). This causes her to fall into the arms of her slaves (κλίνομαι ['recline']) and faint (ἀπποπλήσσομαι ['faint']). Again, the present forms designate punctual events occurring in immediate succession.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Compare E. *Rh.* 789–92, which I discuss in Section 2.5.1.

I have not found clusters of aorist forms in similar passages where punctual events follow so immediately after one another. The following passage illustrates how the aorist is used when events evolve at a more leisurely pace:

- (20) στάς δ' ἐν μέσῳ Ταλθύβιος, ᾧ τόδ' ἦν μέλον,  
 εὐφημίαν ἀνείπε καὶ σιγὴν στρατῶ·  
 Κάλχας δ' ὁ μάντις ἐξ κανοῦν χρυσήλατον  
 ἔθηκεν ὄξυ χειρὶ φάσγανον σπάσας  
 κολεῶν ἔσωθεν κρατὰ τ' ἔστεψεν κόρης.

Standing in their midst Talthybius, whose task this was,  
 called for respectful silence from the army.  
 Then Calchas the seer, drawing a sharp sword  
 from inside its sheath, placed it in a golden basket,  
 and garlanded the girl's head.

(Euripides, *Iphigeneia in Aulis* 1563–7)

In (18) and (19), one event immediately causes the other's occurrence, while the actions described in (20) merely constitute steps in a protocol. (Narrative tempo is also related to communicative dynamism [Section 2.5.1]: events tend to evolve quickly at critical points in the story.)

#### 2.4.2 Discourse Connection

I make a distinction between *retrospective* discourse connection, where particles specify the relation between the host clause and the previous one, and *prospective* discourse connection, where particles anticipate a relation between the host clause and the following one.

For present purposes, three modes of retrospective discourse connection can be distinguished: simple 'and-connection'; complex discourse connection (particles designating adversative or hierarchical relationships); and no explicit connection ('asyndeton'). I formulate three hypotheses with respect to these types of discourse connection.

First, particles specifying complex discourse relations are expected to lower the odds of the present for preterite being used in comparison with simple 'and-connection'. Particles belonging to the former group are the following: γάρ ('for'), which has an embedding function (a 'push' particle); οὖν/(τοί)νυν ('so'), which brings the discourse back to a higher level (a 'pop' particle); and ἀλλά ('but') and μέντοι ('however'), which signal adversative relations (see Slings [1997]; Bakker [2011]). The particles δέ,

Table 2.5 *Tense and simple versus complex discourse connection*

Category	<i>Present</i>	<i>Aorist</i>	Odds ratio	<i>p</i> -value
Complex	10 (12)	29 (27)	0.764	0.477 <sup>a</sup>
Simple	158 (156)	350 (352)		

<sup>a</sup>B = -.269 (constant = -.795), standard error = .379.

Table 2.6 *Tense and δέ versus και*

Category	<i>Present</i>	<i>Aorist</i>	Odds ratio	<i>p</i> -value
και	54 (45)	88 (97)	1.503	0.052 <sup>a</sup>
δέ	100 (109)	245 (236)		

<sup>a</sup>B = .408 (constant = -.896), standard error = .210.

και and τε constitute the baseline group of ‘*and*-connectives’. The results of the comparison are listed in Table 2.5.<sup>82</sup>

The observed effect (odds ratio 0.764) is statistically meaningless ( $p = 0.477$ ).

Second, within the group of *and*-connectors (δέ, και and τε), the particle δέ is thought to reflect the greatest degree of editing because it signals ‘(slight) textual discontinuity’ (Allan [2011a: 41], referring to Bakker [1993]). Allan (2011a) presents some data from Thucydides suggesting the present has a slight predilection for the particle και over δέ, which he relates to the principle of immediacy.<sup>83</sup> I will focus on these two particles here, hypothesising that the use of και as a connective increases the odds of the main clause verb being marked with the present. The results are listed in Table 2.6.

An effect is observed (odds ratio 1.503), but this is still relatively uncertain ( $p = 0.052$ ).

Third, I hypothesise that the absence of a connective particle increases the odds of the present for preterite being used in comparison with *and*-connection. The results are listed in Table 2.7.

<sup>82</sup> I will not discuss the particles in the ‘complex’ group individually, as there are too few occurrences for this to be instructive.

<sup>83</sup> The interpretation of this finding is problematic due to the lack of a focused comparison: see Section 2.1.1.2 with note 20, and Section 2.1.1.3.



Table 2.7 *Tense and ‘and-connection’ versus asyndeton*

Category	<i>Present</i>	<i>Aorist</i>	Odds ratio	<i>p</i> -value
Asyndeton	13 (13)	29 (29)	1	
<i>And-connection</i>	158 (158)	350 (350)		

The observed counts are identical to the expected counts (therefore, there is no need to run a regression analysis). However, there is more to be said. In almost all cases where no connective particle is used, the effect is mitigated by certain factors. There is often a temporal connective (εἴτα [‘next’]) or an anaphoric pronoun (ἐνταῦθα [‘at that point’]). In other cases, discourse considerations play a role: asyndeton is natural at the very beginning of a narrative<sup>84</sup> or in a further explication of something that has already been narrated.<sup>85</sup>

However, there is a marked usage of asyndeton that is observed with the present for preterite. One instance is discussed by Allan (2009: 179):

(21) ὁ δ’ ὡς ἐπ’ αὐτοῖς δὴ Κυκλωπίοισιν ὦν  
**σκάπτει μοχλεύει** θύρετρα.

But he, in the impression that he was besieging the cyclopien gates,  
**digs up, wrenches open** the door.

(Euripides, *Heracles* 998–9)

Allan argues that ‘the speed of the actions is iconically expressed by the asyndetic juxtaposition of σκάπτει [‘digs up’] μοχλεύει [wrenches open]’. A similar usage is found in the following example:

(22) ἐμῶν γὰρ ὀμμάτων  
 πόρπας λαβοῦσαι τὰς ταλαιπώρους κόρας  
**κεντοῦσιν αἰμάσσουσιν**.

Taking their brooches,  
 they **stab, make bloody** the poor pupils  
 of my eyes.

(Euripides, *Hecuba* 1169–71)

<sup>84</sup> E.g., E. *Cyc.* 381–2 {Χορός} πῶς, ὦ ταλαιπῶρ, ἦτε πάσχοντες τάδε; | {Ὀδυσσεύς} ἐπεὶ πετραῖαν τήνδ’ ἐσήλθομεν ἄχθόνατ’ . . . (‘{Chorus} How, poor man, did you suffer these things? {Odysseus} When we came to this rocky ground . . .’) The alternative would be to use an embedding γάρ (see, e.g., de Jong [1991]).

<sup>85</sup> E.g., E. *Cyc.* 411–12 ἐσήλθέ μοι τι θεῖον· ἐμπλήσας σκύφος | Μάρωνος αὐτῷ τοῦδε προσφέρω πιεῖν (‘a divine idea occurred to me: filling a cup with this Maron [i.e., wine], I bring it to him to drink’).

Table 2.8 *Tense and the particle μέν*

Category	<i>Present</i>	<i>Aorist</i>	Odds ratio	<i>p</i> -value
μέν	4 (7)	20 (17)	0.451	0.152 <sup>a</sup>
Baseline	179 (156)	404 (407)		

<sup>a</sup>B = -0.795 (constant = -0.814), standard error = 0.555.

I have found no instances of the aorist in such ‘asyndetic juxtapositions’, as Allan calls them. While this finding does not tell us much from a quantitative perspective, it is at least suggestive of a relationship between present tense usage and this particular form of iconic discourse connection.<sup>86</sup>

Finally, I turn to prospective discourse connection. The particle μέν (generally untranslatable in English) signals that the host assertion should be viewed in connection with a following one, which is then introduced by δε.<sup>87</sup> I hypothesise that the presence of the particle μέν decreases the odds of the present for preterite being used. The results are listed in Table 2.8.

The distribution suggests a substantial effect (odds ratio 0.451), but there are very few cases of μέν in total, so that this is statistically uncertain ( $p = 0.152$ ).

In conclusion, the general hypothesis explored in this section was that simplicity in discourse connection increases the odds of the present being used instead of the preterite. While none of the individual results amounted to much in terms of statistical significance, the overall impression is important as well: the results were either positive (Tables 2.6 and 2.8) or neutral with respect to the hypothesis (Tables 2.5 and 2.7 – ignoring the slight effect in Table 2.5, which is basically a 50/50 proposition). Moreover, incidental observations suggest that a particularly vivid type of asyndeton may be associated with the present for preterite.

### 2.4.3 Sentence Complexity

According to the general hypothesis explored in this section, sentence complexity is expected to decrease the odds of the present being used in the main clause instead of the preterite. I make a distinction between

<sup>86</sup> Both cases of asyndeton were actually excluded from the data sample on the ground that, when the second of two juxtaposed verbs (with or without connective particle) presupposes all the syntactic information associated with the first verb, tense-switching is unlikely. See Appendix, Section A.1.5.

<sup>87</sup> See Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1407a23.

Table 2.9 *Tense and temporal subordinate clauses*

Category	<i>Present</i>	<i>Aorist</i>	Odds ratio	<i>p</i> -value
Complex	14 (19)	50 (45)	0.62	0.13 <sup>a</sup>
Simple	169 (164)	374 (379)		

<sup>a</sup>B = -.479 (constant = -.794), standard error = .316.

participial clauses and subordinate clauses. In the group of participial clauses, I have included both conjunct participial clauses (where the subject is coreferential with the subject in the main clause) and absolute participial clauses (where the subject is different from the subject in the main clause). I do not present all the counts (the categories range from 0 to 3),<sup>88</sup> but simply note that the results are negligible (odds ratio 1.099, *p*-value 0.481).<sup>89</sup>

Next, I considered temporal subordinate clauses introduced by ὅτε ('when'), ἐπεὶ ('when'), ὡς ('as'). As the number of such subordinate clauses rarely exceeds 1, I have created only two categories: simple (no temporal subordinate clause) or complex (1 or more temporal subordinate clauses). The results are listed in Table 2.9.

Some effect is observed (odds ratio 0.62) but it is statistically uncertain (*p* = 0.13).

#### 2.4.4 *Position of the Verb*

Kroon (2002: 195) lists 'frequent initial position of the verb' as one of the markers of the immediate narrative mode in Latin. In my view, this makes sense for Classical Greek as well. When the information conveyed by the verb is focal (i.e., central to the assertion), it usually precedes other focal constituents. This means that, when a sentence is made up of entirely new information, the verb will be in first position (Matić [2003: 582–8]). Topical (presupposed) information may either precede the verb or follow it. I argue that the placement of the verb *before* topical information reflects the urgency of a crisis situation.

Let me illustrate these principles with two contrastive examples. In Aristophanes, *Birds* 496–7, we read κάρτι προκύπτω | ἔξω τείχους καὶ

<sup>88</sup> I removed the sole instance with 4 participial clauses from the data.

<sup>89</sup> B = .094 (constant = -.884), standard error = .133. *N* = 606. In this case, where the predictor variable is numeric, the odds ratio expresses the increase in odds per increase in unit of the predictor (i.e., for each additional participial clause).

λωποδύτης **παιεί** ροπάλω με τὸ νῶτον ('and I just **stoop forward** out of the city walls and a mugger **hits** me in the back with a club'). The mugger mentioned in the second clause is a new referent in the discourse, but he is here construed as topic: λωποδύτης ('mugger') stands at the initial position of the clause, before the verb παιεί ('hits'), which carries focal information.<sup>90</sup> Information structure here is not iconic of actual experience. In reality, the speaker must first have felt the blow, and only later realised who dealt it; but as we process the discourse, we identify the perpetrator before we learn what he did. Contrast the following example:

- (23) καί μ' ἔγχος αὐγάζοντα καὶ θηρώμενον  
**παιεί** παραστάς νεῖραν ἐς πλευράν ξίφει  
 ἀνὴρ ἀκμάζων.

And as I was looking and searching for my sword,  
 a man in his prime, standing by me, **hits** me right in the side  
 with his sword.

(Euripides, *Rhesus* 793–5)

Here, the verb παιεί ('hits') occupies the very first position in the main clause, which reflects the character of the original experience: first the blow is felt, then the other aspects of the situation are observed or deduced.<sup>91</sup>

My hypothesis, then, is that placement of the verb in the initial position of the main clause increases the odds of the present for preterite being used. The definition of the 'main clause', however, is problematic: the intervention of subordinate clauses renders constituents 'extra-clausal' (Matić [2003: 580–2]; Allan [2014]).<sup>92</sup> I have simplified the matter by including complex sentences only when the main clause assertion precedes all participial and subordinate clauses ([23] was thus excluded). The cases that were included were coded for whether the position of the verb was initial or non-initial.<sup>93</sup> The results are listed in Table 2.10.

<sup>90</sup> On topic positions in Classical Greek in general, see Allan (2014).

<sup>91</sup> Similarly, at *A. Pers.* 205–6, we read ὄρῳ δὲ φεύγοντ' αἰετὸν πρὸς ἑσχάραν | Φοίβου ('and I see an eagle flee to the hearth of Phoebus'). Here the information is all new, and the verb is in the first position. Contrast *S. OT* 1263 οὐ δὴ κρεμαστήν τὴν γυναικί' εἰσεῖδομεν ('where we saw the woman hanging'). Here the verb (εἰσεῖδομεν ['saw']) follows upon another focal constituent (κρεμαστήν ['hanging']) as well as a topical constituent (τὴν γυναικία ['the woman']). In my view, the first example conveys a stronger sense of immediacy than the latter.

<sup>92</sup> Constituents may also be rendered extra-clausal by intonation pauses; I have disregarded this matter here.

<sup>93</sup> In determining initial position, I disregarded connective particles (e.g., καί ['and']), but nothing else. I excluded cases of *tnesis*, where the preposition is separated from the verb, as in *E. Ion* 1204–5 ἐκ δ' ἔκλαγγ' ὄπα ἀξύνετον αἰάζουσ' ('it uttered a shriek, crying unintelligibly'). It is dubious whether such cases should be considered verb-initial or not.

Table 2.10 *Tense and the position of the verb*

Category	<i>Present</i>	<i>Aorist</i>	Odds ratio	<i>p</i> -value
Initial	56 (37)	65 (84)	2.762	< 0.001 <sup>a</sup>
Non-initial	63 (82)	202 (183)		

<sup>a</sup>B = 1.016 (constant = -1.165), standard error = .233.

A substantial effect is observed (odds ratio 2.762), and the intrinsic probability of the correlation being due to chance is quite low ( $p < 0.001$ ).

#### 2.4.5 *Voice*

Coding for voice in Classical Greek is complicated by the fact that semantic categories are not neatly mapped onto morphological categories.<sup>94</sup> In the present tense, there is a morphological distinction between an active and a middle voice. ‘Passive’ is only one of several semantic categories covered by the polysemous middle voice. For the aorist, there is a separate morphological category we call ‘passive’. However, this category encompasses not only true passives (ὤφθην [‘was seen’]) but also intransitive verbs (ἤσθην [‘feel joy’]) and intransitive counterparts of causative verbs (active ὠρμησα [‘set in motion’] with ‘passive’ ὠρμήθην [‘rushed’]).

Establishing a baseline category of ‘active’ forms is problematic for similar reasons. Not all morphologically active forms have corresponding passives: some are intransitive (θνήσκω [‘die’]), some are causatives, with the passive having intransitive meaning. The matter is further complicated by the existence of an ‘internal accusative’ in Classical Greek that can be used with intransitive verbs. An example would be ναυμαχίην ναυμαχίαν, literally ‘sea-fight a sea-fight’. Such constructions are sometimes passivised.

In light of such difficulties, I do not present a statistical analysis but limit myself to some observations. In the ‘present’ category, true passives are rare. There are only two cases where an active construction would have been possible. First, Sophocles, *Antigone* 422–3 καὶ τοῦδ’ ἀπαλλαγέντος ἐν χρόνῳ μακρῷ, | ἢ παῖς ὄρᾶται (‘and when this passed after a long time, the child **is seen**’). Here, ‘we see the child’ would have been completely

<sup>94</sup> For voice in Classical Greek, see Allan (2003).

natural. Second, Euripides, *Alcestis* 183–4 πᾶν δὲ δέμνιον | ὀφθαλμοτέγκτω **δεύεται** πλημμυρίδι ('the whole bed **is wetted** by a flow of tears'). Alcestis falls on her bed, crying, and thereby makes it wet.<sup>95</sup> Other cases are more difficult. For example, at Sophocles, *Electra* 746–7 we read σὺν δ' **ἐλίσσεται** | τμητοῖς ἰμάσι ('and he **is rolled up** in the reins cut from leather'). The event designated here occurs spontaneously (Orestes falls out of his chariot and is caught in the reins) and an active construal would be extraordinary.<sup>96</sup>

While passive present for preterite forms are rare, this does not mean much because the same is true for the aorist. A particularly marked instance is Sophocles, *Ajax* 729–30 ὥστ' ἐς τοσοῦτον ἦλθον ὥστε καὶ χεροῖν | κολεῶν ἐρυστὰ διεπεραιώθη ξίφη ('so that they came to a point where even swords were drawn from their sheaths with hands'). An active construal ('they drew') would have been much more natural here.<sup>97</sup> But again, other cases are not as straightforward. Consider Euripides, *Hippolytus* 1246–7 ἵπποι δ' ἐκρυφθεν καὶ τὸ δύστηνον τέρας | ταύρου λεπταίας οὐ κάτοιδ' ὅποι χθονός ('the horses and the wretched bull-beast were hidden somewhere in the rocky ground'). The agent here is unknown, and we may well understand 'were hidden' as 'disappeared'.<sup>98</sup>

In conclusion, there is no clear evidence that a passive construal influences tense usage. There are simply too few unambiguous instances of truly passive verb forms overall.

#### 2.4.6 Number

I hypothesise that a plural subject has a negative effect on the odds of the present for preterite being used. The results are listed in Table 2.11.<sup>99</sup>

A substantial effect can be observed (odds ratio 0.361), and the intrinsic probability of the correlation being due to chance is quite low ( $p < 0.001$ ).

<sup>95</sup> There is a variant reading *δέυετο* ('was wetted'; imperfect), but this is metrically unlikely. For an active construal with this verb see E. *HF* 980 *ἔδευσεν* ('wetted').

<sup>96</sup> The same is true for S. *OT* 812 *ἐκκυλίνδεται* ('is rolled out of'); *Ant.* 1189 *ἀποπλήσσομαι* ('am struck away', i.e., 'faint').

<sup>97</sup> There are three more unambiguous passives: S. *El.* 713 *ἔμεστώθη* ('was filled'); *Ant.* 420 *ἔμεστώθη* ('was filled'); E. *Ion* 1215 *ὠφθη* ('was seen').

<sup>98</sup> Other problematic instances: A. *Pers.* 206 *ἑστάθην* ('was made to stand' or 'stood'); E. *Bac.* 306 *ἐπληρώθημεν* ('were filled'; said of people gathering in a certain number).

<sup>99</sup> When the gender of the subject is neuter, a singular verb form can be used even when the subject is plural. This happens in three instances, and I have excluded these from the data (A. *Ag.* 1385 *μεθήκεν* ['gave in']; S. *Aj.* 730 *διεπεραιώθη* ['were taken across']; *Ant.* 1209 *περιβάτει* ['surrounds']).

Table 2.11 *Tense and number*

Category	<i>Present</i>	<i>Aorist</i>	Odds ratio	<i>p</i> -value
Plural	16 (32)	89 (73)	0.361	< 0.001 <sup>a</sup>
Singular	166 (150)	333 (349)		

<sup>a</sup>B = -1.020 (constant = -.696), standard error .288.

This supports the idea of the mimetic use of the present for preterite being associated with grammatical simplicity.

#### 2.4.7 *Verbal Simplicity*

We have been concerned with verb use earlier (Section 2.2.1), but here the issue is not what kind of event is designated but how it is construed by the verb phrase. The hypothesis is that the use of uncommon expressions to designate simple events decreases the odds of the present for preterite being used. A proper quantitative analysis would require a complex coding procedure, so I will only limit myself to discussing some suggestive examples here.

To begin with, consider the following passage:

- (24) κάγω τὸν ἐκτρέποντα, τὸν τροχηλάτην,  
**παίω** δι' ὀργῆς· καὶ μ' ὁ πρέσβυς, ὡς ὄρᾳ,  
 ὄχους παραστειχόντα τηρήσας, μέσον  
 κάρα διπλοῖς κέντροισί μου καθίκετο.

And out of anger I **hit** the charioteer, who tried to  
 get me out of the way. And the old man, when he sees this,  
 {waited} for me to walk past the chariot and  
came down on my head with his double-edged goad.

(Sophocles, *King Oedipus* 806–9)

There is a contrast here between the present παίω ('hit') and the aorist καθίκετο ('came down on'). A search in the TLG shows that the word καθικνέομαι ('come down on') is uncommon in the literature from the Classical period, and example (24) is the only instance where it is used of a physical strike. The verb παίω ('hit') is the most direct expression for the conceptual content of someone hitting another, as in Demosthenes, *Against Evergus and Mnesibulus* (47) 38 εἰσιόντος δέ μου **παίει** πύξ ὁ

Θεόφημος τὸ στόμα ('as I entered, Theophemus **hits** me in the mouth with his fist'). (Note also the sentence-final position of the aorist verb in example [24]; compare Section 2.4.4.)

Here is another example (compare Section 2.2.2):

- (25) ἐξαλλαγείς γὰρ τοῦ παρεστῶτος πόνου,  
 λαιὸν μὲν ἐς τοῦπισθεν **ἀναφέρει** πόδα,  
 πρόσω τὰ κοῖλα γαστρὸς εὐλαβούμενος,  
 προβάς δὲ κῶλον δεξιὸν δι' ὀμφαλοῦ  
καθῆκεν ἔγχος σφονδύλοισι τ' ἐνήρμοσεν.

Turning away from the present engagement,  
 he **brings** his left foot back,  
 keeping an eye on the pit of [the other's] stomach from a distance,  
 and stepping forward with his right leg, he sent his spear down  
 [his opponent's] navel and fitted it in his spine.

(Euripides, *Phoenician women* 1409–13)

The event designated by the present ἀναφέρει ('brings') is highly concrete and described in simple terms. Eteocles' action with the spear, by contrast, is described in a figured manner. The verb καθῆκεν ('sent down') does not reflect the violent nature of the act. Similarly, to say that Eteocles 'fitted in' (ἐνήρμοσεν) his spear in Polynices' spine is a rather complicated way of expressing what happened. The straightforward alternative would be ὠθέω ('drive through'), which we actually find in the present for preterite later in the same play:<sup>100</sup>

- (26) κῶπραξε δεινά· διὰ μέσου γὰρ αὐχένος  
ὠθεῖ σίδηρον.

And she did a terrible deed, for she **drives** the sword right  
 through her neck.

(Euripides, *Phoenician women* 1457–8)

Such examples are, of course, merely suggestive, but they do indicate that verbal simplicity may be a factor that allows us to account for instances of the preterite that are otherwise difficult to explain given the 'mimetic potential' of the designated events.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>100</sup> Technically, the form ὠθεῖ is morphologically ambiguous between a present and an imperfect (with accentuation ὠθει), but an imperfective aspectual construal is out of the question here.

<sup>101</sup> I discuss some further examples in the case study in Section 2.6.2: E. *HF* 993 καθῆκε ('sent down'), 1000 κατέστρωσεν ('laid low').



### 2.4.8 Conclusion

I have argued in this section that the linguistic construal of the conceptual content conveyed by the narrator is mimetic in so far as the discourse structure, syntax and word choice facilitate a 'natural' kind of processing that mirrors the processing of immediate experience. I then explored the hypothesis that this type of narrative mimesis has a positive influence on the odds of the present being used instead of the preterite. I discussed seven relevant parameters and presented data from the corpus pertaining to each. With respect to discourse time versus story time (Section 2.4.1) and verbal simplicity (Section 2.4.7), I was only able to discuss some suggestive examples. In the case of voice (Section 2.4.5), quantitative analysis was problematic as well, as it turned out that true passives were rare. As far as quantitative analysis was possible, substantial effects were observed for verb position (Section 2.4.4) and number (Section 2.4.6). The data for discourse connection (Section 2.4.2) and sentence complexity (Section 2.4.3) yielded only hints of an effect here and there.

I think the main reason for the absence of strong evidence in certain cases is that narrative in drama is generally mimetic in character. For example, temporal subordinate clauses, passives and particles marking complex discourse relations are rare in the corpus. This makes differences between the tenses with respect to these parameters slight. Nevertheless, I conclude that, overall, the results lend some (if not overwhelming) support to the hypothesis that mimesis in linguistic construal positively correlates with present for preterite usage.

## 2.5 Narrative Mimesis and Communicative Dynamism

So far my argument has been concerned with different dimensions of narrative mimesis. In this section, I will add another variable to the equation: communicative dynamism. Before doing so, however, I think it will be useful to take a bird's-eye view of the argument to this point and present some interim conclusions.

The main argument in this chapter has been that narrative mimesis is positively correlated with present for preterite usage. I have distinguished three aspects of narrative mimesis. The first concerns how the conceptualisations evoked by the narrative engage the cognitive systems involved in actual perception and movement (mental simulation). The second type of mimesis consists in depiction, that is, the narrator physically acting out the events in the narrative. The third aspect concerns the degree to which

the linguistic construal of the communicated content facilitates the processing of the discourse in such a way that this activity mirrors the processing of actual experience.

Some thoughts about the cohesion between these three aspects. The distinction between conceptualisation (mental simulation), on the one hand, and, on the other, the expression of these conceptualisations through depiction or linguistic construal, is useful for descriptive purposes; in reality, however, these aspects are intertwined. For example, physical simulation in the form of gesture is believed to be a correlate of mental simulation (Hostetter and Alibali [2008]; see Section 2.3). Similar considerations apply to the relationship between mental simulation and linguistic construal. For example, Troscianko (2014b: 23) argues that basic-level designations of entities ('chair') evoke a stronger sensorimotor simulation than words that are over-specific ('kitchen chair') or too general ('furniture').<sup>102</sup> Generally, it has been suggested that the nature of thinking that generates speaking is determined, in part, by the properties of the linguistic code of a language ('thinking for speaking', Slobin [1987]). I maintain that it makes sense to consider the basic conceptual content ('person X hits person Y') as a variable that is distinct from how it is expressed, either through physical mimesis (e.g., with a hitting gesture or without gesture) or through linguistic construal (*He hit him* versus *He made his fist acquainted with the other's forehead*). But at the same time, we must also acknowledge the interactions between these variables.

This has the following implications for my account of the mimetic present for preterite in terms of a simulation as representation. On one level, there are three distinct simulation spaces: the mental simulation or 'mental replay', the surrounding space that serves as the stage for the narrator's acting and the linguistic form of the discourse. At the same time, the interactions between these simulation spaces can be understood in terms of a higher-level simulation space, where sensorimotor simulation, depiction and linguistic iconicity together contribute to the overall impression that the past events are being re-enacted in the ground space.

As to the influence of the individual simulation spaces on tense-switching, the data suggests that the effect of mental simulation in terms of the concreteness of the designated events and personal involvement is central (Section 2.2). Not much can be said with regard to depiction, and

<sup>102</sup> Also, Westbury and Moroschan (2009) found that there is a positive correlation between the 'imageability' of a word and the simplicity of its phonological structure.

the influence of direct speech representation is not immediately evident (Section 2.3). The results for linguistic construal are a mixed bag, with some parameters yielding substantial results, others only slightly hinting at a possible correlation (Section 2.4). A problem here is that narrative in drama is generally mimetic (rarity of indirect speech, paucity of subordinate clauses, et cetera), so that any differences in the conditions of use of the past and present tenses with respect to such variables are harder to pin down.

### 2.5.1 *Communicative Dynamism*

The preceding discussions may have given rise to the impression that I view the mimetic use of the present for preterite as the necessary outcome of some formula where all relevant variables are measures of narrative mimesis – as if a certain level of narrative mimesis were both necessary and sufficient conditions for the use of the present for preterite. There are, however, two sides to the equation. Narrative mimesis certainly facilitates the construal of the narrated events as being part of the present, but on the other hand, the use of the present tense is itself part of a strategy to *impose* such a construal on the communicative situation. This means that the rhetorical concerns of the narrator also need to be taken into consideration when accounting for tense-switching in discourse. My argument in this section is that the influence of narrative iconicity on tense-switching is moderated by the degree of *communicative dynamism* in the narrated events (McNeill [1992], [2005]).

Communicative dynamism concerns the newsworthiness or relevance of the designated events in the context of the communicative situation. I distinguish between three parameters. First is ordinariness versus unexpectedness. Events that evolve according to a certain protocol, custom or routine are low in communicative dynamism. Transgressive acts, unexpected developments and miraculous phenomena are the opposite. Second, events are high in communicative dynamism when they are directly relevant to the present communicative situation.<sup>103</sup> The third parameter is whether the designated events involve an increase or decrease in narrative tension. In the overall structure of narrative, the narrative tension culminates in the *peak* and is released in the following *resolution*.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>103</sup> For the present for preterite and rhetorical relevance, see, e.g., Sicking and Stork (1997); Lamers and Rademaker (2007); Nijk (2013a), (2016a).

<sup>104</sup> For more on the theory of the overall structure of narrative, see Chapter 3, Section 3.4.

The importance of communicative dynamism for tense-switching can be related to narrative mimesis through the phenomenology of attention, as I explained in the introduction to this chapter. In actual experience, our attention may be more or less focused depending on what is happening around us. When something unusual or unexpected happens, our attention is heightened – especially if the event poses some kind of threat. If narrative is mimetic of actual experience, then our engagement with the narrative will similarly be heightened when the designated events are high in communicative dynamism.

I will discuss three contrastive examples to illustrate these points here; more detailed and extensive analyses of text passages will be presented in Section 2.6. The three cases presented here are centred around particular verbs that are marked with the present in one context but with the aorist in another. One point I should make is that it is impossible to find contrastive pairs that are perfectly equivalent with respect to narrative mimesis and differ only in the degree of communicative dynamism. In fact, the two often seem to go hand in hand, so that salient information is presented in a more strongly mimetic manner.<sup>105</sup>

My first contrastive pair involves two passages where characters jump up (the Greek phrase is ὀρθὸς ἀνέσσω) after waking up. The context of the first passage is as follows: Hector has summoned King Rhesus and his Thracian army to aid Troy in the war against the Greeks. At night, the Thracian camp is attacked by Odysseus and Diomedes. Rhesus' charioteer witnessed and survived the attack but is unable to identify the perpetrators. He tells how, when he woke from a nightmarish dream, he found the camp was under attack:

<sup>105</sup> A similar interaction between mimesis and communicative dynamism has been observed in gesture studies. In Hostetter and Alibali's (2008) account, gesture is simulated action, that is, the physical realisation of a mental simulation (see Section 2.3). When the activation of a mental simulation is strong enough to pass the 'gesture threshold', the premotor action states involved in mental simulation spread to motor areas, resulting in gestural behaviour. This gesture threshold can be lowered, according to Hostetter and Alibali (2008: 506), when the represented information is high in communicative dynamism. In other words, in such contexts the required activation strength for the mental simulation to result in gesture is lower, so that speakers will gesture more. Conversely, McNeill (2005: 103) points out that *absence* of gesture may be due to low communicative dynamism, 'a complete predictability of what comes next'. Moreover, the *complexity* of referential gestures negatively correlates with the predictability of the referent (McNeill [2005: 55]). In short, considerations of a rhetorical nature moderate the influence that the activation strength of the mental simulation has on gesture usage. As communicative dynamism is reduced, 'the materialisation of imagery is predicted to diminish and, as this happens, an imagery-language dialectic shrinks to purely verbal formulas' (McNeill 2005: 103).

- (27) ἐγὼ δ' ἀμύνων θήρας **ἐξεγείρομαι**  
 πῶλοισιν· ἔννουχος γὰρ **ἐξώρμα** φόβος.  
**κλύω** δ' ἐπάρας κρᾶτα μυχθισμὸν νεκρῶν·  
 θερμὸς δὲ κρουνὸς δεσπότητος παρὰ σφαγῆς  
**βάλλει** με δυσθνήσκοντος αἵματος νέου.  
 ὀρθὸς δ' **ἀνάσσω** χειρὶ σὺν κενῆι δορός·  
 καὶ μ' ἔγχος αὐγάζοντα καὶ θηρώμενον  
**παίει** παραστάς νεῖραν ἐς πλευράν ξίφει  
 ἀνὴρ ἀκμάζων. φασγάνου γὰρ **ἠσθόμην**  
 πληγῆς, βαθεῖαν ἄλοκα τραύματος λαβών.  
**πίπτω** δὲ πρηνῆς· οἱ δ' ὄχημα πωλικὸν  
 λαβόντες ἵππων **ἔεσαν** φυγῆι πόδα.

I **wake up** trying to ward the beasts off  
 the horses, for the nightly terror **roused** me.  
 Raising my head, I **hear** the groaning of dying men,  
 and a warm stream of fresh blood, coming from my slaughtered  
 master,  
 who was dying with difficulty, **hits** me.  
 I **jump** straight **up** with no spear in my hand.  
 And as I {was} looking and searching for my sword,  
 a man in his prime, standing by me, **hits** me right in the side  
 with his sword. [I say 'in his prime',] for I **felt** the blow  
 of his sword, receiving a deep wound.  
 I **fall** on my face; but the perpetrators {took} the chariot  
 with the horses and **sent** their foot to flight.

(Euripides, *Rhesus* 787–98)

The attack on the camp is an extremely transgressive act, and it comes as a complete surprise to the charioteer. From the moment the charioteer wakes from his portentous dream, the narrative tension rises, until it reaches its climax when he is struck down by one of the attackers. From a larger narrative-structural perspective, this passage constitutes the main crisis (peak) of the narrative. The main point of the narrative is that the camp has been attacked and that the Thracians, including Rhesus, have been slain. The preceding passages (762–78: the charioteer feeds the horses; 779–86: he has a troubled dream) prepare for the main conflict narrated in the passage cited above. After this, the imperfect in **ἔεσαν** φυγῆι πόδα ('**sent** their foot to flight', 798) marks typical resolution material: the perpetrators got away unhindered.

In the following contrastive example, a servant of Pentheus, king of Thebes, describes the actions of the women who left Thebes in a frenzy to serve Dionysus:

- (28) ἡ σὴ δὲ μήτηρ ὠλόλυξεν ἐν μέσοις  
 σταθεῖσα βάκχαις ἐξ ὕπνου κινεῖν δέμας,  
 μυκῆμαθ' ὡς ἤκουσε κεροφόρων βοῶν.  
 αἱ δ' ἀποβαλοῦσαι θαλερὸν ὀμμάτων ὕπνον  
ἀνῆξαν ὀρθαί, θαῦμ' ἰδεῖν εὐκοσμίας,  
 νέαι παλαιαὶ παρθένοι τ' ἔτ' ἄζυγες.  
 καὶ πρῶτα μὲν καθεῖσαν εἰς ὤμους κόμας  
 νεβρίδας τ' ἀνεστεῖλανθ' ὄσαισιν ἀμμάτων  
 σύνδεσμ' ἐλέλυτο, καὶ καταστίκτους δορὰς  
 ὄφεισι κατεζώσαντο λιχμῶσιν γένυσιν.

Your mother raised a cry, standing in the midst  
 of the bacchantes, to make them move their body from sleep,  
 when she heard the lowing of horned cattle.  
 They, shedding refreshing sleep from their eyes,  
jumped straight up, a marvel of orderliness to look upon,  
 young and old women, and still unmarried maidens.  
 And first they sent down their hair to their shoulders  
 and tucked up their fawn-skins (so many as had their  
 fastenings loosened), and they girded the  
 dappled hides with snakes licking their jaw.

(Euripides, *Bacchantes* 689–98)

The phrase ἀνῆξαν ὀρθαί ('jumped straight up') in 693 mirrors ὀρθὸς δ' ἀνάσσω ('and I jump straight up') in example (27). In the present instance, there is an almost complete absence of narrative tension. Where the charioteer in (27) wakes up in a state of distress due to a bad dream, the bacchantes wake up after 'refreshing sleep' (692 θαλερὸν ὕπνον). The charioteer in (27) jumps up in agitation, but when the bacchantes rise, they are a 'marvel of orderliness to behold' (θαῦμ' ἰδεῖν εὐκοσμίας). In (27), the narrative tension culminates soon after the charioteer has risen from his sleep. Here, by contrast, the bacchantes simply put their attire in order.

In (27), high communicative dynamism goes hand in hand with strong narrative mimesis. The events marked with the present are all highly concrete and intense: waking up in a state of agitation (787 ἐξεγείρομαι ['wake up']), hearing men dying (789 κλύω ['hear']), feeling blood spurting against one's body (791 βάλλει ['hits']), jumping up (792 ἀνάσσω ['jump up']), getting hit (794 παῖει ['hits']), falling (797 πίπτω ['fall']). These are traumatic experiences that will stand out vividly in the speaker's memory. Moreover, discourse time is highly iconic to story time. In (28), the designated actions are concrete as well, but less forceful or intense

(695 καθεῖσαν ['sent down'], 696 ἀνεστείλαντο ['tucked up'], 698 κατεζώσαντο ['girded']). Also, these actions take more time to occur than the punctual events marked with the present in (27), especially as they are carried out by different individuals (for the effect of a plural subject on tense usage, see Section 2.4.6).

My second contrastive pair concerns two instances of the verb ἐκραίνω ('scatter out of'), referring to the shocking act of smashing someone's skull against a rock. In Sophocles' *Women of Trachis*, Hyllus tells the story of how his father Heracles was overcome by frenzied pain during a sacrifice. In his madness, Heracles throws his servant Lichas against a rock:

- (29) κάκεῖνος ὡς ἤκουσε καὶ διώδυνος  
 σπαραγμὸς αὐτοῦ πλευμόνων ἀνθήψατο,  
 μάρψας ποδὸς νιν, ἄρθρον ἢ λυγίζεται,  
**ρίπτει** πρὸς ἀμφίκλυστον ἐκ πόντου πέτραν·  
 κόμησ δὲ λευκὸν μυελὸν **ἐκραίνει**, μέσου  
 κρατὸς διασπαρέντος αἵματός θ' ὁμοῦ.

When Heracles heard it, and an agonising  
 convulsion laid hold of his lungs,  
 he {seized} him by the foot, where the ankle plays in the socket,  
 and **hurls** him onto the seaswept rock;  
 and he **scatters** the white marrow **out** from his hair,  
 as the head was shattered and blood was mixed in.

(Sophocles, *Women of Trachis* 777–82; trans. after Lloyd-Jones [1994])

The present forms mark a highly shocking act and an unexpected turn of events in the story. Compare the following passage from Euripides' *Cyclops*, where Odysseus tells how the cyclops feasted on his companions:

- (30) ὡς δ' ἦν ἕτοιμα πάντα τῷ θεοστυγεῖ  
 "Αἶδου μαγείρῳ, φῶτε συμμάρψας δύο  
ἔσφαζ' ἑταίρων τῶν ἐμῶν, ῥυθμῶ θ' ἐνὶ  
 τὸν μὲν λέβητος ἐς κύτος χαλκήλατον  
 < >  
 τὸν δ' αὔ, τένοντος ἀρπάσας ἄκρου ποδός,  
 παίων πρὸς ὄξυν στόνυχχα πετραίου λίθου  
 ἐγκέφαλον ἐξέρρανε· καὶ ἴκαθαρπάσας†  
 λάβρω μαχαίρᾳ σάρκασ ἐξώπτα πυρὶ,  
 τὰ δ' ἐς λέβητ' ἐφῆκεν ἔψεσθαι μέλη.

When everything was ready for this god-hated  
 cook of Hades, he {grabbed} two of my companions  
 and slaughtered them. In a single rhythm,

he < . . . > the one in the bronze cauldron;  
 the other he {seized} by the tendon at the end of his foot,  
 and, smashing him against the sharp edge of a rocky stone,  
 he scattered out his brain. Then †he cut them up†  
 with a fierce blade, roasted their flesh in the fire,  
 and put their limbs in the cauldron to boil.

(Euripides, *Cyclops* 396–404)

In the previous passage (382–95), we have been told of the elaborate preparations made by the cyclops before he starts cooking. The preterite is consistently used to mark these actions. Now that everything is ready, the cyclops proceeds according to plan. While the event designated by the aorist ἐξέβρανε ('scattered out', 402) marks an act that is, in itself, shocking, in the present context it is merely one step in the preparation of the cyclops's meal. There is no real narrative tension because Odysseus and his companions are completely helpless. Salient developments start only at 411–12, where Odysseus figures out a plan to escape (note the present προσφέρω ['bring']) in 412).<sup>106</sup>

With respect to narrative mimesis, the description in (30) is rather dry and 'objective' compared to that in (29). The phrase λευκὸν μυελόν ('white marrow') to designate the object in (29) is more vivid than the designation ἐγκέφαλον ('brain') in (30). In (29), the word κόμης ('from his hair') adds another vivid detail, and the narrator elaborates with the gruesome phrase μέσου | κρατὸς διασπαρέντος αἵματός θ' ὀμοῦ ('as the head was shattered and blood was mixed in'). Also, the juxtaposition of the main clause verbs ρίπτει ('throws') and ἐκρᾶίνει ('scatters out of') is more iconic of actual experience than the hypotactic construction παίων . . . ἐξέβρανε ('smashing . . . he scattered out of') in (30).<sup>107</sup>

Finally, let us consider two instances where the expression πέπλους ῥήγνυμι ('tear one's robes') is used. In Aeschylus' *Persians*, Atossa, the

<sup>106</sup> Unfortunately, there seems to be a line missing which must have had a main clause verb, so we cannot be sure that a present was not used here; but the strong connection between the killing of the two companions (398 ῥυθμῶ θ' ἐνί ['in a single rhythm']) would suggest that the tenses are coordinated as well. (Seaford [1984] solves the problem by switching the order of lines 398 and 399.)

<sup>107</sup> The connection between the two passages is observed by Davies (1991) ad loc. and, indirectly, by Easterling (1982) ad loc., who refers back to Homer, *Odyssey* 9.287ff. as the model for Euripides' treatment of the episode. With respect to κόμης ('from the hair'), the vivid effect is observed by Easterling (1982): '[T]he brain is seen oozing through Lichas' hair.' Davies (1991), however, finds the phrase 'distinctly odd'. Again, Davies feels that no good sense can be made out of μέσου | κρατὸς διασπαρέντος αἵματός θ' ὀμοῦ. I can only disagree and submit that Jebb's (1908) rendering ('as the skull was dashed to splinters and blood scattered therewith') exactly hits the mark.



mother of king Xerxes, tells of a distressing dream she had concerning her son. In her dream, two women, one Persian, one Greek, were subdued by Xerxes and yoked to a chariot. One of the women was obedient, but the other broke free:

- (31) ἡ δ' ἐσφάδαιζε καὶ χεροῖν ἔντη δίφρου  
**διασπαράσσει** καὶ **ξυναρπάζει** βία  
 ἄνευ χαλινῶν καὶ ζυγὸν **θραύει** μέσον.  
**πίπτει** δ' ἔμὸς παῖς, καὶ πατήρ **παρίσταται**  
 Δαρεῖος οἰκτίρων σφε· τὸν δ' ὅπως ὄρᾳ  
 Ξέρξης, πέπλους **ρήγνυσιν** ἀμφὶ σώματι.

But the other **struggled** and with her hands  
**tears** the harness of the car and **drags** it violently along with her,  
 free of the bit, and **breaks** the yoke in half.  
 My son **falls**, and his father Darius  
**stands by**, pitying him; and when Xerxes sees him,  
 he **tears** the robes around his body.

(Aeschylus, *Persians* 194–9)

This cluster of six main clause present for preterite forms (note also the present ὄρᾳ ('sees') in the subordinate clause in 198) is exceptional.<sup>108</sup> The episode is full of violent action and is highly distressing to Atossa, as it is a sign of her son's fate in Greece. In this context, Xerxes' gesture of tearing his robes is poignant: he has suffered defeat at the hands of the Greeks and is a failure in the eyes of his father. This foreshadows the parts in the play where the ghost of Darius offers his perspective on Xerxes' actions (681–842) and where Xerxes appears, lamenting his defeat (from 908 to the end).

Contrast the following passage, where Polyxena gets ready to be sacrificed by the Greeks to placate the soul of Achilles:

- (32) κάπει τόδ' εἰσήκουσε δεσποτῶν ἔπος,  
 λαβοῦσα πέπλους ἐξ ἄκρας ἐπωμίδος  
 ἔρρηξε λαγόνας ἐς μέσας παρ' ὀμφαλὸν  
 μαστοῦς τ' ἔδειξε στέρνα θ' ὡς ἀγάλματος  
 κάλλιστα.

And when she had heard this word from her master,  
 she {took} her robe and tore it from the edge of the shoulder

<sup>108</sup> It is paralleled by S. *Tr.* 693–704, if we take κατέψηκται ('has crumbled away', 698) and κείται ('lies', 701) as referring to the past, which I think we probably should (with Boter [2012: 215–16]; Rijksbaron [2015: 231] disagrees). See Appendix, Section A.2.1, with note 16.

to the middle of the waist, by her navel, and she displayed her breasts and her chest, exceedingly beautiful as that of a statue.  
(Euripides, *Hecuba* 557–61)

Unlike Xerxes, Polyxena has become resigned to her fate: she announces that she is prepared to die voluntarily in 546–52. There is a consistent emphasis on Polyxena's remarkable composure throughout the ritual: even as she died, she 'took great care to fall with decorum' (569 πολλήν πρόνοιον εἶχεν εὐσχήμων πεσεῖν). In this context, then, the event of Polyxena tearing her clothes does not carry particular weight; it is merely part of the necessary preparations for the sacrifice.

### 2.5.2 Conclusion

In this section, I have argued that communicative dynamism acts as a moderating influence on the effect of narrative mimesis on tense-switching. While narrative mimesis facilitates the construal of past events as presently accessible, the newsworthiness or relevance of the designated events influences the propensity of the narrator to highlight this construal with the present tense. However, as the contrastive pairs discussed here illustrate, the two parameters are difficult to tease apart: a mimetic style of narration seems to be preferred precisely in those parts that are especially noteworthy and important to the discourse.

## 2.6 Case Studies

In this final section, I present two contrastive case studies to illustrate how the explanatory principles outlined in this chapter can be employed to account for tense-switching in extended passages of dramatic narrative. I present these case studies in three sections. First, in Section 2.6.1, I compare two narratives from the *Electra* plays of Sophocles (lines 893–908) and Euripides (lines 509–19). These narratives deal with the same event – the discovery of tokens of Orestes' return at the tomb of Agamemnon – but are very different in their presentation. I will argue that these differences in narrative technique (neatly pointed out by Finglass [2007: 380]) explain why, in Sophocles' version, the present is the main narrative tense, while in Euripides' version, all events are narrated in the preterite.

The two case studies in Sections 2.6.2 and 2.6.3 are intended as another contrastive pair. In Section 2.6.2, I discuss the messenger's narrative of

Heracles' madness in Euripides' eponymous play (focusing on lines 963–1012). This narrative has the highest number of present for preterite forms in the selected corpus – about 15 in total.<sup>109</sup> I will argue that this concentration of present forms is due to the extremely dynamic character of the narrative, which is full of violence, speed and consternation. Then, in Section 2.6.3, I discuss a passage from Aristophanes' comedy *Wealth*, which describes a healing ritual performed by the god Asclepius in his sanctuary (696–747). Here I argue that reduced narrative mimesis and, especially, low communicative dynamism are the factors that explain the complete absence of the present for preterite in this extended narrative passage.

A note on my analysis. I will focus mainly on the contrast between the present for preterite and the aorist, allowing myself to pass over most of the imperfect forms. These can typically be explained in terms of actionality and aspectual construal, and I regard these factors as largely extraneous to the principles of narrative mimesis and communicative dynamism. I will similarly be brief in my discussion of aorists of atelic verbs (see Section 2.1.1.2 with note 24; Introduction, Section 1.4.4; Appendix, Section A.2).

### 2.6.1 *Sophocles, Electra 893–908 and Euripides, Electra 509–19*

Sophocles' and Euripides' *Electra* plays both revolve around the plot of Orestes' return to the house of Agamemnon. After Agamemnon returned from Troy, he was murdered by his wife Clytaemnestra, whose new husband Aegisthus usurped the throne. Agamemnon's son Orestes was banished, while his daughter Electra remained behind. In Sophocles' version, Electra still lives in the palace, but in Euripides' version, she has been married out to a farmer and lives in the country.

In both plays, someone visits the tomb of Agamemnon and sees that sacrificial rites have been performed for the dead king. This person tells Electra what he/she saw. In Sophocles' version, the narrator is Chrysothemis, Electra's sister; in Euripides, it is an old man, who was once Agamemnon's nurse (Chrysothemis has no part in this play). The two narratives make for a

<sup>109</sup> Two forms are morphologically ambiguous between the present and the imperfect (without an augment): ὠθεῖ ('pushes/pushed', 969) and χωρεῖ ('moves/moved', 995). In my view, these are best interpreted as present forms; see my discussion below.

striking contrast with respect to tense usage, as Chrysothemis predominantly uses the present tense, while the nurse sticks to the preterite.

Let us begin with Sophocles' version. Chrysothemis returns from the tomb of her father Agamemnon in a jubilant state, for she is positive that Orestes has returned (871–91). Electra is skeptical, but listens to Chrysothemis' tale:

ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἦλθον πατρός ἀρχαῖον τάφον,  
**ὄρω** κολώνης ἐξ ἄκρας νεορρύτους  
 πηγᾶς γάλακτος καὶ περιστεφῆ κύκλω  
 πάντων ὅσ' ἔστιν ἀνθέων θήκην πατρός. 895  
 ἰδοῦσα δ' ἔσχον θαῦμα, καὶ **περισκοπῶ**  
 μή ποῦ τις ἡμῖν ἐγγύς ἐγχιρίμπτει βροτῶν.  
 ὡς δ' ἐν γαλήνῃ πάντ' ἔδερκόμην τόπον,  
 τύμβου προσεῖρπον ἄσσον· ἐσχάτης δ' **ὄρω** 900  
 πυρᾶς νεώρη βόστρυχον τετμημένον·  
 κεῦθὺς τάλαιν' ὡς εἶδον, **ἐμπαίει** τί μοι  
 ψυχῇ σύνηθες ὄμμα, φιλτάτου βροτῶν  
 πάντων Ὀρέστου τοῦθ' ὄραν τεκμήριον·  
 καὶ χερσὶ βαστάσασα **δυσφημῶ** μὲν οὐ, 905  
 χαρᾶ δὲ **πίμπλημι**· εὐθὺς ὄμμα δακρῶν.  
 καὶ νῦν θ' ὁμοίως καὶ τότε' ἐξέπισταμαι  
 μή του τόδ' ἀγλάισμα πλὴν κείνου μολεῖν.

When I approached our father's ancient tomb,  
 I **see** on top of the mound freshly flowing  
 streams of milk, and my father's urn crowned  
 with a ring of every kind of flower.

Seeing, I **wondered**<sub>AOR</sub>, and I **look around**  
 in case any person was nearby.

But when I saw that the whole place was quiet,  
 I **crept**<sub>IMP</sub> closer to the tomb; and on the edge of the pyre, I **see**  
 a newly cut lock of hair.

At the moment that I saw it, ah! a familiar imagine **strikes** me  
 in my mind, [as I realised I was] beholding a token of him among mortals  
 whom I love the most, Orestes!

Taking it in my hands, I **utter** no **ill-omened words**,  
 but at once **fill** my eyes with tears of joy.

And I know now, just as I knew then,  
 that this ornament came from none but him.

(Sophocles, *Electra* 893–908; trans. after Lloyd-Jones [1994])

Chrysothemis' narrative iconically conveys the character of her actual experiences. Finglass (2007: 380) calls the narrative 'engaging' and makes

a number of observations that square well with my mimetic account of the present for preterite.

First, 'the stress on [Chrysothemis'] personal autopsy of the events'. We find many verbs of 'seeing' or 'looking' throughout: 894 ὀρῶ ('see'), 897 ἰδοῦσα ('seeing'), 897 περισκοπῶ ('look around'), 899 ἐδερχόμην ('saw'), 900 ὀρῶ ('see'), 902 εἶδον ('saw'). There is also simulated perception, as the mental image of Orestes strikes Chrysothemis (903 ὄμμα ['image'] 904 ὀρᾶν ['beholding']). This consistent emphasis on perception heightens the mimetic quality of the narrative.

Second, 'the emphasis on the discovery as a process'. As we follow the narrative, 'we observe Chrysothemis' increasing emotion, as she moves from surprise (897) to suspicion (897–8), then to joy (902–6)' (Finglass [2007: 380]; compare de Jong [1991: 35–8] on similar techniques in Euripidean messenger speeches). Again, this strengthens our empathy with the narrator, inviting us to simulate her emotions so that we can recreate the narrated experiences for ourselves.

Third, Finglass (2007: 380) argues that '[s]ome elements in her speech have a colloquial edge to them'. He points to the use of the present for preterite, but also to an aspect of sentence construction. At 897, the participle ἰδοῦσα ('seeing') picks up the main verb ὀρῶ ('see') in 894; similarly, at 902 the subordinate clause ὡς εἶδον ('at the moment that I saw it') picks up ὀρῶ ('see') in 900. This type of construction is considered a feature of 'unsophisticated' or 'unelevated' narrative. Finglass argues that this colloquial character 'conveys the infectious excitement of the narrator'. This can be related to linguistic simplicity as narrative mimesis (Section 2.4).

Now for the individual present forms. The use of the present to mark sights (ὀρῶ ['see'] in 894 and 900) is typical, as simulated perception is highly iconic of actual perception. In 902, the verb ἐμπραΐει ('strikes') refers to a mental image, which is already simulated perception in itself; so the simulation potential may be even higher here, as a simulation of simulated perception will be even more iconic than a simulation of actual perception. Note, furthermore, that there is a strong affective component: Chrysothemis construes the mental vision as something which 'strikes' her, and at this point in the narrative she highlights her misery with the word τάλαινα 'wretched' (rendered 'ah!' by Lloyd-Jones).

The emotional impact of the realisation that Orestes has returned is further emphasised in lines 905–6. The present forms in the balancing statements (δυσφημῶ ['utter ill-omened words'] and πίμπλημι ['fill']) must be taken together as one whole, with the weight lying on the positive

statement. That is, the negated form is in the present mostly because it anticipates the following positive statement.<sup>110</sup> The feeling of being overcome with emotion is concrete and intense.<sup>111</sup>

The remaining present form is **περισκοπῶ** ('look around') in 897. This is a somewhat unusual instance, as the verb designates an activity (as Boter [2012] rightly points out; see Introduction, Section I.4.5). The implicit aspectual construal here is most probably imperfective, as suggested by the imperfect ἐδερκόμεν ('saw') in the following narrative subordinate clause. My explanation for the use of the present here is the strong simulation potential of the verb. Looking around is a concrete bodily activity (moving the head and the upper body in different directions), and we may well imagine that at this point the narrator would mimic the act of looking around.

There are two preterites in this narrative. First there is the aorist **ἔσχον** (θαῦμα), lit. 'caught (surprise)'. This is an ingressive aorist of a stative verb; the present is generally excluded here.<sup>112</sup> The imperfect **προσεῖπτον** ('crept') is chosen, I think, because Chrysothemis wishes to highlight the imperfective aspectual construal: this slows down the narrative and creates suspense, as we wonder what she will find next. The effect is reinforced by the adverb ἄσσον ('closer'), which does not signal a definite endpoint.

Now let us compare Euripides' version, where it is Agamemnon's old nurse who tells the story:

ἦλθον γὰρ αὐτοῦ πρὸς τάφον πάρεργ' ὁδοῦ  
καὶ προσπεσῶν ἔκλαυσ' ἔρημίας τυχῶν, 510  
σπονδὰς τε, λύσας ἄσκόν ὃν φέρω ξένοις,  
ἔσπεισα, τύμβω δ' ἄμφέθηκα μυρσίνας.  
πυρᾶς δ' ἔπ' αὐτῆς οἶν μελάγχιμον πόκω  
σφάγιον ἐσεῖδον αἰμά τ' οὐ πάλοι χυθὲν  
ξανθῆς τε χαίτης βοστρύχους κεκαρμένους. 515  
κάθαύμασ', ὦ παῖ, τίς ποτ' ἀνθρώπων ἔτλη  
πρὸς τύμβον ἔλθεῖν· οὐ γὰρ Ἀργείων γέ τις.  
ἀλλ' ἦλθ' ἴσως που σὸς κασίγνητος λάθρα,  
μολῶν δ' ἐθαύμασ' ἄθλιον τύμβον πατρός.

<sup>110</sup> See Appendix, Section A.1.6.

<sup>111</sup> A remarkable instance of the present for preterite referring to crying is A. *Supp.* 578–9 δακρύων δ' ἄπο- | στάζει πένθιμον αἰδῶ, lit. 'she sheds the grievous shame of her tears', i.e., 'she wept out of grief and shame.' This choral narrative, which tells the story of Io (540–85), is full of present for preterite forms. In my view, this should be understood in terms of the status of the myth as a traditional story (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2).

<sup>112</sup> See Appendix, Section A.2.1.

For as a detour on my journey I went<sub>AOR</sub> to his tomb,  
 and finding myself alone I {fell down} and wept<sub>AOR</sub> for him;  
 I {opened} the wineskin I am now bringing for your guests and  
poured<sub>AOR</sub> him libations and put<sub>AOR</sub> myrtle branches around his tomb.  
 But on the altar itself I saw<sub>AOR</sub> a black lamb, slaughtered, blood recently shed,  
 and shorn locks of blond hair. I wondered<sub>AOR</sub>, child, what mortal had had the  
 courage  
 to visit the tomb. Certainly it was no citizen of Argos.  
 But perhaps your brother has come in secret  
 and on his arrival honored the wretched tomb of his father.

(Euripides, *Electra* 509–19; trans. after Kovacs [1998])

The aorist ἦλθον ('went') is typical at the very beginning of the story when there is no subordinate clause to set the scene. In Chrysothemis' narrative, we find this same verb in such a subordinate clause (893). The actions of the nurse at the grave (ἐκλαυσα ['wept'], ἔσπεισα ['poured'], ἀμφέθηκα ['put around']) are customary: there is nothing remarkable about a servant paying respects to his former master at his grave. Also, the verb phrases κλαίω ('weep') and σπονδᾶς σπένδω ('pour libations') designate activities; and putting myrtle branches around the tomb (ἀμφέθηκα ['put around']) is a durative action. This makes the narrative tempo less iconic here than in Chrysothemis' narrative.

The most interesting case is that of ἐσεῖδον ('saw'). In contrast to Chrysothemis, the old man does not mark this remarkable discovery with a present tense.<sup>113</sup> Where Chrysothemis is sure she has seen signs of Orestes' return (907–8), the old man only tentatively suggests this possibility (ἴσως ['perhaps'] in 518).<sup>114</sup> In fact, lines 518–19 and the following discussion of the possible evidence for Orestes' return (520–44) have been regarded as suspect by some scholars (see Roisman and Luschnig [2011] ad 520–44). If the passage turned out to be a forgery, this would only underscore my point that the scene at the grave of Agamemnon has less significance for the old man than for Chrysothemis.

The difference in communicative dynamism of the discovery of the tokens of Orestes in the two contexts is reflected in the use of syntax by the respective narrators. The old man places the verb at the very end of the clause:

πυρᾶς δ' ἔπ' αὐτῆς	οἶν μελάγχμιον πόκωι	σφάγιον	ἐσεῖδον
On the altar itself	a black lamb	slaughtered	I saw

<sup>113</sup> For the present for preterite with this composite verb, see *A. Pers.* 207; *E. Ph.* 1099.

<sup>114</sup> Compare Finglass (2007: 380).

There follows an elaboration of two more objects (the blood and the hair), but this makes little difference. The point is that the verb ἐσεῖδον ('saw') is placed after both an object (οἶν μελάγχμιον πόκω ['a black lamb']) and an object complement (σφάγιον ['slaughtered']). The present seems generally dispreferred with this kind of word order.<sup>115</sup> In my view, low information status for the verb reflects narratorial mediation and a measure of distance (compare Section 2.4.4). Chrysothemis, by contrast, places the verb ὄρω ('see') at the very first position of the main clause in 894 and almost in first position in 900. The early placement of the verb conveys an excited tone.

The final main clause verb in the narrative, ἐθαύμασα ('wondered'), designates a state ('ingressive aorist'; see Appendix, Section A.2.1).

To conclude, the difference in tense usage between Sophocles' and Euripides' versions of the discovery of the tokens of Orestes corresponds to the differences in character between these narratives. Chrysothemis, elated at the certain return of Orestes, construes a narrative that conveys the feeling of actual experience through its 'stress on personal autopsy' and the 'emphasis on the discovery as a process' (Finglass 2007: 380). The use of the present for preterite as the main narrative tense highlights the simulative character of the narrative. The old man in Euripides' version, by contrast, tells his story in a state of dejection. The first half of his narrative is merely concerned with the ritual formalities he performed at the grave of his former master (509–12). The discovery of tokens of a sacrifice at the site cause him to wonder (513–17), but he is cautious in assessing their significance. The consistent use of the preterite fits the inhibited character of the narrative.

### 2.6.2 Euripides, *Heracles* 963–1012: *Heracles' Madness*

The messenger narrative in Euripides' *Heracles* (922–1012) describes how Heracles kills his sons in a fit of madness. Heracles has just killed Lycus, the usurper of the throne of Thebes, and is about to perform a purification sacrifice. Suddenly, he is overcome with madness. The idea occurs to him that he should first kill Eurystheus, the man who sent him on his labors, and only then purify himself. He then imagines himself riding a chariot to Mycenae; in fact, he is only moving back and forth through the house.

<sup>115</sup> Compare the aorists of the verb ὄρω ('see') in S. *OR* 1263 (κρεμαστήν – τὴν γυναῖκα' – εἰσεῖδομεν ['hanging – the woman – we saw']) and *Ant.* 1221 (τὴν – κρεμαστήν ἀχένης – κατεῖδομεν ['her – hanging by her neck – we saw']).



I start my discussion at the point where Heracles imagines having arrived at the city of Eurystheus, bent on killing the man and his children (who are, of course, nowhere near):

δεινὰ δ' Εὐρυσθεῖ βρέμων  
 ἦν ἐν Μυκῆναις τῷ λόγῳ. πατὴρ δέ νιν  
 θιγῶν κραταιᾶς χειρὸς **ἐννέπει** τάδε·  
 ὦ παῖ, τί πάσχεις; τίς ὁ τρόπος ξενώσεως  
 τῆσδ'; οὐ τί που φόνος σ' ἐβάκχευσεν νεκρῶν  
 οὓς ἄρτι καίνεις; ὁ δέ νιν Εὐρυσθέως δοκῶν  
 πατέρα προταρβοῦνθ' ἰκέσιον ψαύειν χερὸς  
**ὠθεῖ**, φαρέτρην δ' εὐτρεπῆ **σκειυάζεται**  
 καὶ τόξ' ἑαυτοῦ παισί, τοὺς Εὐρυσθέως  
 δοκῶν φονεύειν. οἱ δὲ ταρβοῦντες φόβῳ  
 ὠρουον ἄλλος ἄλλοσ', ἐς πέπλους ὁ μὲν  
 μητρὸς ταλαίνης, ὁ δ' ὑπὸ κίονος σκιάν,  
 ἄλλος δὲ βωμόν ὄρνις ὡς **ἐπτηξ'** ὕπο.  
**βοᾶ** δὲ μήτηρ· ὦ τεκῶν, τί δροῖς; τέκνα  
 κτείνεις; **βοᾶ** δὲ πρέσβυς οἰκετῶν τ' ὄχλος.

Then uttering fierce threats against Eurystheus he was<sub>IMP</sub>, by his own account, in Mycenae. But his father, grasping him by his mighty hand, **says**: 'My son, what has come over you? What is this change you have undergone? Surely it was not the blood of the men you just killed that has made you mad?' But thinking that Eurystheus' father was grasping his hand in fear as a suppliant, Heracles **pushes** him away and **makes ready** his bow and quiver against his own children, believing that he was killing Eurystheus' children. These in fear **rushed**<sub>IMP</sub> in different directions, one to his poor mother's skirts, another to the shelter of the column, while another **cowered**<sub>AOR</sub> like a bird under the protection of the altar. Their mother **cries out**: 'Ah, what are you doing? You are their father: will you kill the children?' The old man and the throng of servants **cry out** too.

(Euripides, *Heracles* 962–76; trans. after Kovacs [1998])

Heracles' father tries to reason with him. The use of the present to introduce an anxious plea (**ἐννέπει** ['says']) is typical; compare **βοᾶ** ('shouts') in 975 and **αὐδᾶ** ('says') in 988 (see below, where I adduce another parallel).<sup>116</sup> Heracles pushes his father away. The present **ὠθεῖ**

<sup>116</sup> Compare also **λέγω** ('say') in *S. Aj.* 288, where Tecmessa tries to prevent Ajax from leaving his encampment at night. Also, in the same play (but outside the selected corpus), 764 **ἐννέπει** ('says'), where Ajax' father warns him that he should always respect the gods. Like Heracles, Ajax rejects both appeals – to his ruin.

(‘pushes’) denotes concrete and forceful manual action.<sup>117</sup> Heracles then makes ready his bow and quiver to use against his children. The present in **εὐτρεπιῆ σκευάζεται** (‘makes ready’) is not strongly mimetic. Making one’s equipment ready does involve manual action, but no force is involved, and the action is durative. However, in the present context, the designated event is high in communicative dynamism, as it means that Heracles now turns against his own children. At this point the situation turns into a full-blown crisis.

Heracles’ children seek refuge. The aorist **ἔπτηξε** (‘cowered’) merely expands on information already given by the imperfect **ῶρουον** (‘rushed’) at 972. I think the lack of specific identification of the children is also a factor here; they are simply labelled 972 **ὁ** (‘one’), 973 **ὁ** (‘another’), 974 **ἄλλος** (‘another’). The aorist is preferred in such contexts.<sup>118</sup>

Heracles’ mother **cries out** (**βοᾷ**), trying to get Heracles to come to his senses. The cry is seconded by the father and the servants (another present **βοᾷ** [‘cry out’]). Again, the present highlights an anxious plea, and the verb is strongly mimetic (Section 2.2.1). Note also the initial position of the verb in both cases (Section 2.4.4).

In the next part of the narrative, Heracles kills one of his children:

ὁ δ’ ἐξελίσσων παῖδα κίονος κύκλω  
 τόρνευμα δεινὸν ποδός, ἐναντίον σταθεῖς  
**βάλλει** πρὸς ἧπαρ· ὕπτιος δὲ λαΐνους  
 ὀρθοστάτας **ἔδευσεν** ἐκπνέων βίον. 980  
 ὁ δ’ **ἠλάλαξε** **κάπεκόμψεν** τάδε·  
 ‘Εἷς μὲν νεοσσὸς ὄδε θανῶν Εὐρυσθέως  
 ἔχθραν πατρῶων ἐκτίνων πέπτωκέ μοι.’

But he, circling the child in a grim turn  
 around the column, {stood} facing the boy  
 and **shoots** him through the liver. Falling on his back,  
 the boy **drenched**<sub>AOR</sub> the stone pillars as he {breathed out} his life.  
 Heracles **shouted in triumph**<sub>AOR</sub> and **uttered**<sub>AOR</sub> this **boast**:  
 ‘Here’s one fledgling of Eurystheus dead:  
 his death is payment to me for his father’s hostility!’

(Euripides, *Heracles* 977–83; trans. after Kovacs [1998])

<sup>117</sup> The verb is morphologically ambiguous between a present and an imperfect, but I think the former reading is probably right, as nothing in the context encourages an imperfective reading.

<sup>118</sup> Compare E. *Med.* 1177–8 ἡ μὲν ... ὤρμησεν, ἡ δὲ ... (‘one rushed ... but another ...’); *Hec.* 1151–6 πολλοὶ ... ἤνουν ... ἄλλοι δὲ ... ἔθηκαν (‘many were praising ... others made’); *IT* 1407–8 χῶ μὲν τις ... ὠρμήθη ... ἄλλος δὲ ἐξανῆπτεν (‘and one rushed ... another fastened’); *Hel.* 1573 ἄλλοι δὲ ... ἀνήρ παρ’ ἀνδρ’ ἕζοντο (‘others sat down next to the men, one next to each’).

Heracles shoots his child in the liver; the present **βάλλει** ('shoots') marks this violent and shocking act. Dying, the child **'drenched'** (**ἔδουσεν**) the pillars (with blood). It is instructive to compare the aorist here with two instances of the present referring to similar events. In the first, Agamemnon dies at the hands of his wife Clytaemnestra:

- (33) κάκφουσιῶν ὄξεϊαν αἵματος σφαγῆν  
**βάλλει** μ' ἔρεμνῆ ψακάδι φοινίας δρόσου.

And he [Agamemnon] {coughed up} a sharp spurt of blood  
and **hits** me with a black shower of gory dew.

(Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 1389–90; trans. after Sommerstein [2008])

In the second, Haemon commits suicide in the arms of Antigone:<sup>119</sup>

- (34) καὶ φουσιῶν ὄξεϊαν **ἐκβάλλει** ῥοήν  
λευκῆ παρειᾶ φοινίου σταλάγματος.

And breathing hard, he [Haemon] **ejects** a sharp stream  
of oozing blood against her [Antigone's] white cheek.

(Sophocles, *Antigone* 1238–9)

In both these cases, the spurting out of blood is construed as a violent physical action: the dying person is said to 'eject' (**ἐκβάλλει**) a stream of blood or to 'hit' (**βάλλει**) another with his blood. Moreover, the description as a whole is quite graphic in both instances. At *Heracles* 980, by contrast, the gruesome details are only implied. Heracles' child is said to 'drench' the pillars, but there is no mention of actual blood, let alone a graphic description such as ἔρεμνῆ ψακάδι φοινίας δρόσου ('a black shower of gory dew') in (33) or ὄξεϊαν ῥοήν φοινίου σταλάγματος ('a sharp stream of oozing blood') in (34). This inhibition on the part of the narrator is reflected in the use of the aorist 'drenched' (**ἔδουσεν**) to mark the event, rather than the present.<sup>120</sup>

Having killed his child, Heracles celebrates his victory: this has no impact on the narrative dynamic. Moreover, **ἠγάλαξε** ('**shouted in triumph**') is an activity verb (Section 2.2.1). The form **ἐκόμπασεν** ('**uttered a boast**') introduces direct speech, but Heracles' words lack the agitation

<sup>119</sup> In all probability, Sophocles imitated Aeschylus here; see, e.g., Fraenkel (1950) ad *Agamemnon* 1389.

<sup>120</sup> Contrast also the use of the present in *E. Alc.* 183–4 πᾶν δὲ δέμνιον | ὀφθαλμοτέγκτωι **δεύεται** πλημμυρίδι ('and the entire bed **is drenched** by her flood of tears'). Here the imagery (ὀφθαλμοτέγκτωι . . . πλημμυρίδι ['with a flood of tears']) is much more explicit than at *Heracles* 980.

or consternation of the speakers whose words are marked with the present tense in this narrative (or elsewhere; see Section 2.3.1).

Next, Heracles approaches his second victim:

ἄλλω δ' ἐπεῖχε τόξ', ὃς ἀμφὶ βωμίαν  
 ἔπτηξε κρηπίδ' ὡς λεληθέναι δοκῶν. 985  
**φθάνει** δ' ὁ τλήμων γόνασι προσπεσῶν πατρὸς  
 καὶ πρὸς γένειον χεῖρα καὶ δέρην βαλῶν  
 ὦ φίλτατ', **αὐδᾶ**, μὴ μ' ἀποκτείνης, πάτερ·  
 σὸς εἶμι, σὸς παῖς· οὐ τὸν Εὐρυσθέως ὀλεῖς.  
 ὁ δ' ἀγριωπὸν ὄμμα Γοργόνης στρέφων, 990  
 ὡς ἐντὸς ἔστη παῖς λυγροῦ τοξεύματος  
 μυδροκτύπον μίμημ' ὑπὲρ κέρα βαλῶν  
 ξύλον **καθήκε** παιδὸς ἐς ξανθὸν κέρα,  
 ἔρρηξε δ' ὄστᾶ.

He **aimed**<sub>IMP</sub> his bow at a second, who was cowering near the base of the altar, thinking he escaped notice.

But the poor boy **throws himself at** his father's knees before [Heracles could shoot],

and thrusting his hand at his chin and neck,

'Dearest father,' he **says**, 'do not kill me.

I am yours! It is *your* son, not Eurystheus' child, you are going to slay!'

But he merely {turned} his fierce Gorgon gaze upon him

and, since the boy stood too close for the deadly bow shot,

{lifted} his club above his head and – just like a smith forging iron –

**sent it down**<sub>AOR</sub> on the boy's blond head

and **smashed**<sub>AOR</sub> his skull.

(Euripides, *Heracles* 984–94; trans. after Kovacs [1998])

The phrase **φθάνει ... προσπεσῶν** ('**throws himself at** [Heracles] **before** [he could shoot]?') requires some explanation. The auxiliary verb φθάνω signals that the action designated by the participle was carried out before someone else could prevent it. Thus, it inherently carries with it connotations of speed and decisiveness, and consequently it has a strong predilection for the present for preterite in general (compare the present with the same verb at 996, see below).<sup>121</sup> In this particular instance, the action that is actually carried out is designated by the verb προσπίπτω ('throw oneself at'), designating forceful bodily movement.<sup>122</sup>

<sup>121</sup> In Thucydides, for example, the present for preterite is used in 7 instances (2.91.1, 3.23.4, 5.3.2, 6.97.2, 6.101.6, 7.23.1, 8.102.2), the aorist in 4 (3.49.4, 3.112.1, 7.6.4, 7.42.3).

<sup>122</sup> Compare D. 19.198 ἔξω δ' αὐτῆς οὖσ' ὑπὸ τοῦ κακοῦ καὶ τοῦ πράγματος ἡ γυνή, ἀναπηδήσασα **προσπίπτει** πρὸς τὰ γόνατα τῶ Ἰατροκλεῖ ('the woman, beside herself because of her miserable situation, {jumps up} and **throws herself at** Iatrocles' knees').

Next, the present αὐδᾶ ('says') marks the son's supplication for his life. A striking parallel is Pentheus' appeal to his frenzied mother Agave in Euripides' *Bacchants*:

(35) καὶ λέγει παρήδος  
 ψαύων· Ἐγὼ τοι, μήτηρ, εἰμί, παῖς σέθεν  
 Πενθεύς, δὴν ἔτεκες ἐν δόμοις Ἐχίονος·  
 οἴκτιρε δ' ὦ μήτηρ με μηδὲ ταῖς ἐμαῖς  
 ἀμαρτίαισι παῖδα σὸν κατακτάνης.'

Touching her cheek,  
 he **says**: 'It is me, mother, your son,  
 Pentheus, whom you bore in the house of Echion!  
 Have pity on me, mother, and do not,  
 on account of my mistakes, kill your son!'

(Euripides, *Bacchants* 1117–21)

Both Pentheus and Heracles' son beg for their life, both address someone who is in a state of madness and does not recognise them and both touch their aggressor as a token of supplication. Also, the present αὐδᾶ ('says') in *Heracles* 988 is in *inquit*-position, so that the influence of the mimesis of direct speech representation on the tense of the reporting verb may be stronger (compare Section 2.3.2).

The actual killing of the second child is marked with two aorists: καθήκε ('sent down') and ἔρρηξε ('smashed'). This seems unexpected, as the killings are violent actions and constitute the essential part of the story. Allan (2009: 195) comments on this and suggests that the second and third killings are not of special interest to the addressees ('less tellable') because they may be expected after the first killing. I think this is a relevant point, but I think it needs to be supplemented with additional linguistic arguments.

I argue that verbal simplicity is the central factor here (Section 2.4.7). The phrase 'send (something) down (on someone)', is not a straightforward reference to an act of hitting; that would be παίω ('hit') or κόπτω ('hit'). In the first place, the complement structure of καθήμι ('send down'), consisting of an object and a prepositional phrase, is more complex than that of παίω ('hit') or κόπτω ('hit'). Second, the verb καθήμι ('send down') lacks the inherent connotation of *forceful* movement that is present in the alternatives just mentioned. The use of a circumlocutory and less forceful expression signals a measure of narratorial distance here that is at odds with the principle of mimetic narration. This may well tie in with Allan's observation that the killing itself is no longer as high in communicative dynamism ('tellable') as it was in the first instance.

As for *ἔρρηξε* ('smashed'), this is not a separate action but rather the consequence of what was narrated in the previous clause. The two verbs *καθῆκε* ('sent down') and *ἔρρηξε* ('smashed') constitute a single sequence, so that continuity of tense usage is natural here.<sup>123</sup>

Heracles now turns against his third child:

δεύτερον δὲ παῖδ' ἔλων  
**χωρεῖ** τρίτον θυμ' ὡς ἐπισφάξων δυοῖν. 995  
 ἀλλὰ **φθάνει** νιν ἢ τάλαιν' ἔσω δόμων  
 μήτηρ ὑπεκλαβοῦσα καὶ **κλήει** πύλας.  
 ὁ δ' ὡς ἐπ' αὐτοῖς δὴ Κυκλωπίοισιν ὦν  
**σκάπτει μοχλεῦει** θύρετρα κάκβαλῶν σταθμὰ  
 δάμαρτα καὶ παῖδ' ἐνὶ κατέστρωσεν βέλει. 1000

Having killed his second son,  
 he **goes off** to sacrifice a third victim on top of the two.  
 But before [he could do so], the wretched mother **takes** him **away**  
 to inside the chamber and **bars** the door.  
 Heracles, just as if he were besieging the Cyclopien walls,  
 **digs up, wrenches open** the door, and having pulled out the doorposts,  
 he laid low<sub>AOR</sub> his wife and child with a single arrow.

(Euripides, *Heracles* 994–1000; trans. based on Kovacs [1998])

The present form *χωρεῖ* ('**goes off**') marks a new development.<sup>124</sup> This use is typical with verbs of movement in dramatic narrative and may be understood in terms of communicative dynamism (compare 1001 *ἵππευει* ['gallops']; see Allan [2009]). This is especially the case when, as here, a strong feeling of danger is involved.

The narrative dynamic intensifies as Heracles' wife '**takes** (the child) **away before** (Heracles can kill him)' (*φθάνει ... ὑπεκλαβοῦσα*) and tries to prevent Heracles from reaching the child by shutting the gates to the inner quarters (*κλήει* ['**bars**']). The auxiliary verb *φθάνω*, again, implies speed and a change in the narrative dynamic. By closing the door, Heracles' wife presents the protagonist with a physical barrier, which

<sup>123</sup> Compare E. *El.* 839–42 τοῦ δὲ νεύοντος κάτω | ὄνυχας ἐπ' ἄκρους στάς κασιγνητος σέθεν | ἐς σφονδύλους ἔπαισε, νωπιαῖα δὲ | *ἔρρηξεν* ἄρθρα ('as he [Aegisthus] was bending forwards, your brother, standing on the edge of his toes, hit him in the spine, and he smashed the joints of his back').

<sup>124</sup> The verb is morphologically ambiguous between the present and the imperfect (*ἐ*)*χώρει* ('moved'). The latter reading is possible: the verb phrase 'move', without a specified destination, designates an activity, and an imperfective construal is likely here because the end is only reached later in the discourse, when Heracles successfully kills his child. However, there are good parallels for the use of the present for preterite with activity verb phrases of movement with imperfective construal, e.g., *ἵππευει* ('gallops') in 1001, discussed below; *στεῖχει* ('strides') in E. *Alc.* 186.

heightens the narrative tension.<sup>125</sup> Heracles breaks down the barrier. The present tense forms **σκάπτει μοχλεύει** (**'digs up, wrenches open'**) denote violent manual action, and, as Allan (2009: 179) notes, the juxtaposition of the two verbs without a connective particle iconically suggests speed (see Section 2.4.2).

The third killing is marked with an aorist: **κατέστρωσεν** (**'laid low'**). Again, I would like to supplement Allan's (2009: 195) explanation in terms of 'tellability' with some more detailed observations. My first point pertains to verbal semantics. The verb **καταστορέννυμι** properly denotes 'spreading something upon another thing'. The meaning 'lay low', of opponents in battle, is found in only four other instances in Classical Greek.<sup>126</sup> As with **καθῆκε** ('sent down') in 993, I argue that the verb used here lacks the inherent connotation of force that is present in its more direct alternative, which is the expression **καταβάλλω** ('throw down').<sup>127</sup> An illustrative case of the present for preterite with that verb is the following:

(36) ὡς δ' εἰς τὸ πεδίον ἦλθεν, ἀκοντίσας **καταβάλλει** τὴν ἔλαφον, καλὸν τι  
χρῆμα καὶ μέγα.

As he came to the plain, he **throws down** the doe with a spear – a fine  
and grand achievement.

(Xenophon, *Education of Cyrus* 1.4.8)

A second point concerns syntax. The verb **κατέστρωσεν** ('laid low') occupies a late position in the sentence: it is preceded by two object complements, as well as the part of the instrumental dative noun phrase which carries focus ('with *one* projectile'). I suggest that the low information status of the verb here reflects the predictability of the killing itself (compare Section 2.4.4), which was the point made by Allan (2009: 195).

Finally, Heracles turns against his father:

κἀνθένδε πρὸς γέροντος **ἵππεύει** φόνον·  
ἀλλ' ἦλθεν εἰκῶν, ὡς ὄρα̃ν ἐφαίνετο  
Παλλάς, κραδαίνουσ' ἔγχος †ἐπι λόφω κέαρ†,

<sup>125</sup> For other acts of door-closing marked with the present in critical situations, see Lys. 1.13 **προστίθησι** τὴν θύραν ('[she] **shuts** the door'): Euphiletus' wife tries to keep her lover hidden from her husband, who has come home unexpectedly. Also, D. 47.56 **κλείουσι** τὸν πύργον ('[they] **close** the [door to the] tower'): some men come to raid a house, and the servants try to keep them out.

<sup>126</sup> Hdt. 8.53, 9.69, 9.76; X. *Cyr.* 3.3.64. In two of these instances (Hdt. 8.53 and 9.76), the verb is in the pluperfect, so that the focus is on the result state (the enemies lying dead).

<sup>127</sup> For the present for preterite with this verb, see Lys. 1.25, 13.71; X. *HG* 5.2.41; *Cyr.* 1.4.8, 4.6.3.

κᾶρριψε πέτρον στέρνον εἰς Ἡρακλέους,  
 ὃς νιν φόνου μαργώντος ἔσχε κᾶς ὕπνον  
 1005 καθήκε· πίτνει δ' ἔς πέδον πρὸς κίονα  
 νῶτον πατάξας, ὃς πεσήμασι στέγης  
 διχορραγῆς ἔκειτο κρηπίδων ἔπι.  
 ἡμεῖς δ' ἔλευθεροῦντες ἐκ δρασμῶν πόδα  
 1010 σὺν τῷ γέροντι δεσμὰ σειραίων βρόχων  
 1009 ἀνήπτομεν πρὸς κίον', ὡς λήξας ὕπνου  
 1011 μηδὲν προσεργάσαιο τοῖς δεδραμένοις.

Then he **gallops** to murder his old father.

But there came<sub>AOR</sub> an image – it seemed to be  
 Pallas Athena, brandishing her sharp-pointed spear in her hand.  
 She hurled<sub>AOR</sub> a stone at the chest of Heracles,  
 which checked<sub>AOR</sub> him from his mad labour and sent<sub>AOR</sub> him  
 into a sleep. He **falls** to the ground, striking his back  
 against a pillar that in the collapse of the house  
 lay broken in two upon the foundations.  
 Freeing ourselves from our panic flight,  
 we bound<sub>IMP</sub> Heracles to the pillar with the help of the old man,  
 with a bond of twisted rope, to prevent him  
 when he woke up from doing still more harm.

(Euripides, *Heracles* 1001–12; trans. after Kovacs [1998], strongly  
 modified at 1002–3)

Similarly to χωρεῖ ('goes off') at 995, the present **ἵππεύει** ('gallops') marks the beginning of Heracles' next venture.<sup>128</sup> Moreover, the description of Heracles' movement as 'galloping' more strongly appeals to the motor faculties of the audience than the blander χωρεῖ ('goes off').<sup>129</sup>

A phantom appears and stops Heracles' madness. The use of aorists here is surprising from a narrative-structural point of view, as this constitutes a turning point in the story. Perhaps the displacement of the narrator's focus from Heracles to another entity, together with the element of narratorial mediation conveyed by ἀλλά ('but'), somehow conspire to lower communicative dynamism here – the present is used again in 1006, where Heracles is the subject – but I readily admit that, without further evidence

<sup>128</sup> Note that the implicit aspectual construal here is certainly imperfective, as Heracles never reaches his goal.

<sup>129</sup> Bond (1981) ad loc.: 'The verb can be used of a human rider (LSJ, I 1) but the metaphor is simpler and more vivid if Heracles "gallops" as a horse to kill Amphitryon.' It might be objected that I regard verbal simplicity as an aspect of narrative mimesis (Section 2.4.7) and that the expression here is figured. However, in cases where I invoke this principle, the point is that a concrete action is described in a less direct way. Here, by contrast, the action is rendered more concrete by the figured expression ('gallops' is a more specific designation of motor processes than 'moves').



for such principles, this is rather ad hoc. I do note that the expression ἤλθεν ('came') does not denote concrete movement, nor does it evoke perception (note, however, ὡς ὄραν ἐφαίνετο ['as it appeared to the eyes'] in the same line). The phantom throws a stone at Heracles. The aorist ἔρριψε ('hurled') does designate concrete and violent physical action; could it be relevant that the subject is a phantom manifestation of a god, and therefore maybe the connotation of physical force is diminished?<sup>130</sup>

The aorists ἔσχε ('checked') and καθῆκε ('sent') designate the result of the previous action. Moreover, the aorist ἔσχε ('checked') belongs to the stative verb ἔχω 'have'.

Finally, Heracles falls to the ground: πίπτει ('falls'). The present is always used with this verb in the selected corpus (Section 2.2.1). Note how the narrator vividly adds that Heracles 'hit his back against a column' as he fell (πρὸς κίονα | νῶτον πατάξας). After this, the imperfect ἀνήπτομεν ('bound') marks the definitive resolution of narrative tension.

In conclusion, the overall narrative is characterised by violence, speed and a feeling of crisis that is conveyed especially strongly through the pleas of the bystanders. Communicative dynamism is extremely high, as there are few things as shocking as a father killing his own children. These features, in my view, account for the high concentration of present for preterite forms here.

In the next and final case study, we will be looking at an extended narrative passage where the present for preterite is entirely absent. Through this contrast, the dynamics of tense-switching will, I hope, become even more apparent.

### 2.6.3 *Aristophanes, Wealth 696–747: Asclepius Heals the God of Wealth*

Two men, Chremylus and his servant Cario, take Plutus, the god of wealth, to a sanctuary of Asclepius to be healed of his blindness. When the party returns, Cario tells Chremylus' wife what happened in an extended narrative (653–747). I will focus here on the second part of this narrative (696–747), where Cario tells how the god Asclepius appeared and treated his patients. (I cut out some exchanges between Cario and Chremylus' wife that add nothing to the progression of the narrative.)

<sup>130</sup> Compare Bond (1981) ad loc.: 'Maybe she [Athene] put down her spear to hurl the rock (1004), but all things are easy for the gods and it is not for us to question their actions.'

First, the god makes his entrance, and Cario commits a blunder:

Γυνή	ὁ δὲ θεὸς ὑμῖν οὐ προσήειν;	
Καρίων	οὐδέπω,	
	μετὰ τοῦτο δ' ἤδη, καὶ γελοῖον δῆτά τι	
	<u>ἔποίησα</u> . προσιόντος γὰρ αὐτοῦ μέγα πάνυ	
	<u>ἄπέπαρδον</u> · ἢ γαστήρ γὰρ ἐπεφύσητό μου.	
Γυ.	ἦ ποῦ σε διὰ τοῦτ' εὐθύς ἐβδελύττετο.	700
Κα.	οὐκ, ἀλλ' Ἰασώ μὲν γ' ἐπακολουθοῦσ' ἅμα	
	<u>ὑπερυθρίασε</u> χῆ Πανάκει' <u>ἄπεστράφη</u>	
	τὴν ῥῖν' ἐπιλαβοῦσ'· οὐ λιβανωτὸν γὰρ βδέω.	
Γυ.	αὐτὸς δ' ἐκέϊνος;	
Κα.	οὐ μὰ Δί' οὐδ' <u>ἐφρόντισεν</u> .	
	...	
	μετὰ ταῦτ' ἐγὼ μὲν εὐθύς <u>ἐνεκαλυψάμην</u>	707
	δείσας, ἐκέϊνος δ' ἐν κύκλῳ τὰ νοσήματα	
	σκοπῶν <u>περιῆει</u> πάντα κοσμίως πάνυ.	
WIFE	But didn't the god approach you?	
CARIO	Not yet,	
	but after that [he did]. And I <u>did</u> <sub>AOR</sub> something	
	ridiculous. For as he was approaching, I <u>farted</u> <sub>AOR</sub>	
	very loudly; for my stomach was all bloated up.	
WIFE	Undoubtedly he immediately loathed you for that.	
CARIO	No, but Iaso, who was accompanying him, <u>turned red</u> <sub>AOR</sub>	
	and Panacea <u>turned away</u> <sub>AOR</sub>	
	holding her nose; for my farts do not smell like incense.	
WIFE	And the god himself?	
CARIO	By Zeus, he <u>didn't</u> <sub>AOR</sub> even <u>mind</u> .	
	...	
	After that I immediately <u>covered myself</u> <sub>AOR</sub>	
	in fear, but the god <u>went round</u> <sub>IMP</sub> , inspecting	
	everyone's diseases, in very orderly fashion.	
	(Aristophanes, <i>Wealth</i> 696–709) <sup>131</sup>	

Cario introduces the next event in the narrative with a narratorial comment: **'I did something ridiculous'** (γελοῖον ... τι ἐποίησα). This is an abstract reference to what he actually did.<sup>132</sup> The actual event is marked with the aorist ἄπέπαρδον (**'farted'**). In itself, the designated event is highly concrete (a spontaneous bodily process). However, the event has

<sup>131</sup> I benefitted greatly from consulting Henderson's (2002) translation.

<sup>132</sup> A similar use of the aorist is found in E. *Hec.* 1169: ἐξειργάσαντο δεινά ('they committed a dreadful deed'). The actual deed is then marked with the present (1171 κεντοῦσιν αἰμάσσοουσιν ['stab, make bloody']). By contrast, in *Ba.* 1063, we read τοῦντεῦθεν ἦδη τοῦ ξένου θαυμάσθ' ὄρω ('next I see marvelous deeds committed by the stranger'). The difference here is that here only the object is abstract (θαυμαστά ['marvelous deeds']); the verb is highly concrete (ὄρώ ['see']).

no repercussions on the narrative dynamic: the god Asclepius pays no heed (704) and goes about his business (709). I think that Cario's embarrassment (707–8) may also have inhibited the use of the present tense (compare my comments on Kramer's *I popped him*: Chapter 1, Section 1.6). It is useful to compare the use of the present for preterite to refer to a spontaneous bodily process in Xenophon, *Expedition of Cyrus* 3.2.9 τοῦτο δὲ λέγοντος αὐτοῦ **πτάρνυται** τις ('as he was saying this, someone **sneezes**'). Here the sneezer interrupts a speech, and his sneeze is interpreted by those present as a positive sign from the gods.<sup>133</sup>

Next, we have four aorists that designate the reactions of all characters to Cario's fart: **ὑπερυθρίασε** ('**turned red**'; Iaso), **ἀπεστράφη** ('**turned away**'; Panacea), **οὐδ' ἐφρόντισεν** ('**didn't even mind**'; Asclepius) and **ἐνεκαλυψάμην** ('**covered myself**'; Carion himself). These reactions, again, do not impact the narrative dynamic in any way. The first and the third of these four verb forms are ingressive aorists of stative verbs (ὑπερυθρίαω ['blush'], φροντίζω ['mind']). For the other two, close parallels can be found in Euripides' *Medea*, where Jason's new wife reacts to her husband bringing his children into her home:

(37) ἔπειτα μέντοι προῦκαλύψατ' ὄμματα  
λευκὴν τ' ἀπέστρεψ' ἔμπαλιν παρήδα,  
παίδων μυσαχθεῖσ' εἰσόδους.

But then she covered her eyes  
and turned away her white cheek,  
disgusted at the entrance of the children.

(Euripides, *Medea* 1147–9)

Ultimately, Jason's new wife changes her mind and assents to everything Jason wants, so her initial reaction has no real impact on the narrative dynamic. Moreover, these actions, while concrete, do not involve physical exertion. The aorist ἀπέστρεψε ('turned away') nicely mirrors ἀπεστράφη ('turned away') at *Wealth* 702, and προῦκαλύψατο ('covered') may be compared to ἐνεκαλυψάμην ('covered myself') at *Wealth* 707.

Now the god gets down to business. In the following passage, he applies medicine to his first patient:

ἔπειτα παῖς αὐτῷ λίθινον θυεῖδιον  
παρέθηκε καὶ δοῖδουκα καὶ κιβώτιον.

710

<sup>133</sup> Compare for the present marking the interruption of a speech Aeschin. 2.106 ταῦτα δ' ἐμοῦ μετὰ λέγοντος, **ἀναβοᾷ** παμμέγεθες Δημοσθένης, ὡς ἴσασι πάντες οἱ συμπρέσβεις ἡμῶν ('in the middle of my saying this, Demosthenes **shouts out** very loudly, as all our fellow ambassadors know').

...  
 πρῶτον δὲ πάντων τῶ Νεοκλείδῃ φάρμακον 716  
 καταπλαστὸν ἐνεχείρησε τρίβειν, ἐμβαλὼν  
 σκοροδῶν κεφαλᾶς τρεῖς Τηνίων· ἔπειτ' ἔφλα  
 ἐν τῇ θυεῖα συμπαραιμειγνύων ὀπὸν  
 καὶ σχῖνον· εἴτ' ὄξει διέμενος Σφηττίῳ 720  
 κατέπλασεν αὐτοῦ τὰ βλέφαρ' ἐκτρέψας, ἵνα  
 ὀδυνῶτο μάλλον. ὁ δὲ κεκραγῶς καὶ βοῶν  
 ἔφευγ' ἀνάξας· ὁ δὲ θεὸς γελάσας ἔφη·  
 'ἐνταῦθα νυν κάθησο καταπεπλασμένος,  
 ἵν' ὑπομνύμενον παύσω σε τὰς ἐκκλησίας.' 725

Next, his servant placed beside<sub>AOR</sub> him  
 a stone mortar, a pestle and a box.

...  
 First of all he started to<sub>AOR</sub> grind a cataplasm  
 for Neocleides, putting in three heads of Tenian garlic. Then, he {mixed in}  
 fig juice and squill, and pounded<sub>IMP</sub> it  
 in the mortar. Then he {soaked} it with Sphettian vinegar,  
 {turned out} his eyelids, and plastered<sub>AOR</sub> them,  
 so that it would hurt more. Neocleides {jumped up} and fled<sub>IMP</sub>,  
 screaming and shouting; but the god said<sub>IMP</sub>, laughing:  
 'Now sit down here [with your eyelids] plastered,  
 so that I may stop you disrupting assemblies with your sworn objections.'  
 (Aristophanes, *Wealth* 710–25)

First, a servant brings the god the necessary equipment (παρέθηκε ['**placed beside**']). Placing is a concrete action but it does not require physical exertion. Moreover, there are three grammatical objects here: λίθινον θυεῖδιον ('a mortar made of stone'), δοῖδουκα ('a pestle') and κιβώτιον ('a box'). So, in fact, the servant commits three acts, and the use of only a single verb here goes against the principle of mimetic grammar.<sup>134</sup> With respect to communicative dynamism, this action only prepares for the actual treatment.

Next, the god '**started to grind**' [ἐνεχείρησε τρίβειν] a cataplasm). Then he applied it to Neocleides' eyelids (κατέπλασεν ['**plastered**']). With regard to verbal semantics, ἐγχειρέω ('start to') is abstract, while the actual process that is started is an activity (τρίβω ['grind']). The verb

<sup>134</sup> Compare E. Cys. 390–4 σκύφος τε κισσοῦ παρέθετ' εἰς εὖρος τριῶν | πήχεων, βάθος δὲ τεσσάρων ἐφαίνετο. | ὀβελούς τ', ἄκρους μὲν ἐγκεκαυμένους πυρὶ, | ξεστοῦς δὲ δρεπάνῳ τέλλα ('and he set next to it a cup of ivy-wood four-and-a-half feet from rim to rim and what looked like a good six feet to the bottom; then spits made of buck-thorn wood, their ends burnt in the fire but the rest of them scraped with a scythe'; trans. Kovacs [2001]).

καταπλάττω ('plaster') does designate concrete manual action, but without force or violence, and is also durative. Moreover, applying medicine is a scripted procedure. This is reflected in the use of adverbs. We find *πρῶτον* ('first') at 716, and *ἔπειτα/εἶτα* ('next') at 716, 718 and 720. The use of such adverbs suggests that the events occurred according to a certain controlled procedure, as opposed to in a turbulent fashion.<sup>135</sup>

Next, Asclepius treats Plutus:

- Κα. μετὰ τοῦτο τῷ Πλούτῳ παρεκαθέζετο,  
καὶ πρῶτα μὲν δὴ τῆς κεφαλῆς ἐφήψατο,  
ἔπειτα καθαρὸν ἡμιτύβιον λαβὼν  
τὰ βλέφαρα περιέψησεν· ἡ Πανάκεια δὲ 730  
κατεπέτασ' αὐτοῦ τὴν κεφαλὴν φοινικίδι  
καὶ πᾶν τὸ πρόσωπον· εἶθ' ὁ θεὸς ἐπόππυσεν.  
ἔξηξάτην οὖν δύο δράκοντ' ἐκ τοῦ νεῶ  
ὑπερφυεῖς τὸ μέγεθος.
- Γυ. ὦ φίλοι θεοί.  
Κα. τούτῳ δ' ὑπὸ τὴν φοινικίδ' ὑποδύνθ' ἤσυχῆ 735  
τὰ βλέφαρα περιέλειχον, ὡς γ' ἔμοι δοκεῖ·  
καὶ πρὶν σε κοτύλας ἐκπιεῖν οἴνου δέκα,  
ὁ Πλοῦτος, ὦ δέσποιν', ἀνειστήκει βλέπων.
- CARIO After this he sat down next to<sub>AOR</sub> Plutus.  
First, he felt<sub>AOR</sub> his head;  
next, taking a clean cloth,  
he daubed around<sub>AOR</sub> his eyelids. Panacea  
wrapped<sub>AOR</sub> his head and his entire face  
in crimson cloth. Next, the god clucked<sub>AOR</sub>.  
Two snakes of extraordinary size darted out<sub>AOR</sub> from the temple.
- WIFE Oh dear gods!
- CARIO These slipped under the cloth quietly  
and licked<sub>IMP</sub> his eyebrows – at least, I imagine they did.  
And sooner than you could drink five pints of wine,  
Plutus, my lady, was standing<sub>PLPERF</sub> able to see.  
(Aristophanes, *Wealth* 727–38)

Asclepius continues the tour of his patients, and the aorists continue to refer to protocollary actions: note again the use of the 'procedural' adverbs *πρῶτα* ('first', 728), *ἔπειτα* ('next', 729) and *εἶτα* ('next', 732). First, the god '**sat down next to**' Plutus (**παρεκαθέζετο**). The verb denotes concrete bodily movement, but the aspect of intensity is absent. The

<sup>135</sup> Compare the use of these adverbs in E. *Cyc.* 383 (*πρῶτον* ['first']) and 386 (*ἔπειτα* ['next']), where Odysseus describes how the Cyclops makes preparations for his meal.

orists ἐφήψατο ('felt'), περιέψησεν ('daubed around'), κατεπέτασε ('wrapped') all refer to non-forceful actions. The second of these verbs is an activity verb, and the third, while telic, is durative.

The god summons two snakes. The aorist ἐπόππυσεν ('clucked') belongs to those obviously onomatopoeic verbs (such as ἀλαλάζω ['cry *alalai*'], ὀτοτούζω ['cry *ototoi*']) that are never marked with the present, presumably because of their atelic actionality (Section 2.2.1). The appearance of two huge snakes would seem to be a remarkable event (note also the reaction of the woman in 734: ὦ φίλοι θεοί ['oh dear gods!']), so we might have expected the present here instead of the aorist (ἐξηξάτην ['darted out']). At the same time, snakes were naturally associated with Asclepian healing rituals.<sup>136</sup> Their appearance here causes no danger or conflict: they peacefully carry out the god's instructions. Still, I admit that, had the present been used, I would have had no qualms about invoking communicative dynamism to account for it.

What is interesting is that there is no peak-marking present form in this narrative. The explanation lies in the particular way in which the climax, the healing of Plutus, is presented. The actual moment he is healed is not narrated. Instead, we are suddenly confronted with the situation in which Plutus has been healed: ἀνειστήκει (pluperfect) βλέπων ('he was standing, able to see').

The last part of the narrative recounts the joyful reaction of Cario and the others present at the healing of Plutus:

ἐγὼ δὲ τῶ χειρ' ἀνεκρότησ' ὑφ' ἡδονῆς  
 τὸν δεσπότην τ' ἠγειρον. ὁ θεὸς δ' εὐθέως 740  
 ἠφάνισεν αὐτὸν οἱ τ' ὄφεις εἰς τὸν νεών.  
 οἱ δ' ἐγκατακείμενοι παρ' αὐτῶ πῶς δοκεῖς  
 τὸν Πλοῦτον ἠσπάζοντο καὶ τὴν νύχθ' ὄλην  
 ἐγρηγόρεσαν, ἕως διέλαμψεν ἡμέρα.  
 ἐγὼ δ' ἐπήγουν τὸν θεὸν πάνυ σφόδρα, 745  
 ὅτι βλέπειν ἐποίησε τὸν Πλοῦτον ταχύ,  
 τὸν δὲ Νεοκλείδην μᾶλλον ἐποίησεν τυφλόν.

I clapped<sub>AOR</sub> my hands out of joy  
 and woke<sub>IMP</sub> my master. The god  
 and the serpents immediately vanished<sub>AOR</sub> themselves into the temple.  
 Those who had been lying next to him hugged<sub>IMP</sub> Plutus,  
 you can imagine, and were awake<sub>PLPERF</sub>  
 the whole night, until the day shone through<sub>AOR</sub>.

<sup>136</sup> See, e.g., Farnell (1921: 240).

I praised<sub>IMP</sub> the god exceedingly,  
because he had quickly caused Plutus to see,  
and had made Neocleides even more blind.

(Aristophanes, *Wealth* 739–47)

All this is resolution material, serving to bring the narrative to a natural close after the main climax (the healing of Plutus). The aorist **ἀνεκρότησα** (**‘clapped’**) marks a reaction, in typical fashion.<sup>137</sup> The form **ἠφάνισεν** (**‘vanished’**) marks the disappearance of participants from the scene after they have fulfilled their narrative function.<sup>138</sup> Finally, the beginning of the new day (**διέλαμψεν** [**‘shone through’**]) marks a natural endpoint to the entire episode (the god operates at night).<sup>139</sup>

To conclude, the consistent use of the preterite in this narrative reflects the general smoothness of the narrative dynamic. The main line is constituted by a healing ritual, which has a formal character. The god Asclepius does inflict pain on one of his patients, Neocleides (716–25), but this is non-threateningly comic to the observers (note also **γελάσας** [**‘laughing’**] in 723). Carion’s fart and the reactions it provokes are secondary to this main line. After the implied peak (the healing of Plutus), the rest is resolution material. All this makes for a stark contrast with the messenger narrative in Euripides’ *Heracles* discussed in Section 2.6.2, where the action was full of violence, speed and consternation, and the present for preterite was richly used.

## 2.7 Conclusion

Let me review the main arguments made in this chapter:

- (a) *Simulation as representation*. I have argued that the use of the present for preterite in scenic narrative depends on the pretence that the past events are presently being simulated or re-enacted. This pretence of re-enactment consists in narrative mimesis, by which I mean an analogous relationship between the narrative experience and actual experience.

<sup>137</sup> Compare E. *Supp.* 720 **κἀκρουσα χεῖρας** (**‘and I clapped my hands’**).

<sup>138</sup> Compare E. *Hipp.* 1247–8 **ἵπποι δ’ ἔκρυφθεν καὶ τὸ δύστηνον τέρας | ταύρου λεπταίας οὐ κάτοιδ’ ὅποι χθονός** (**‘the horses and the wretched bull-monster vanished to somewhere in the rocky land’**).

<sup>139</sup> Compare A. *Pers.* 428 **ἕως κελαινὸν νυκτὸς ὄμι’ ἀφείλετο** (**‘[the naval battle went on] until black night took away sight’**).

- (b) *Narrative mimesis*. I have distinguished three aspects of narrative mimesis. First, sensorimotor simulation of the conceptualisations evoked by the narrative. Second, depiction by means of gesture, stress and intonation, sound symbolism and direct speech representation. Third, simplicity in linguistic construal. I have presented a review of the evidence pertaining to these aspects of narrative mimesis in Section 2.5.
- (c) *Communicative dynamism*. The influence of narrative mimesis on tense-switching is moderated by the degree of communicative dynamism in the narrated events. That is, the threshold for the mimetic use of the present tense is lowered when the narrated events are particularly newsworthy or important to the development of the story.

Finally, some thoughts on how the account presented here relates to the distinction between displacement and representation described in Chapter 1. I have argued that the mimetic use of the present for preterite in Classical Greek involves a conceptual scenario where the past events are brought into the present in the form of a simulation or re-enactment. At the same time, I have argued that this pretence of re-enactment depends on the experiential character of the narrative, which means that the narrator pretends to be bound, to some degree, by the restrictions of an on-the-scene report. To what extent, then, is the distinction between the displacement scenario and the representation scenario meaningful here? Or, to frame the question in terms of a metaphor, how can we tell whether we are dealing with *virtual reality* (immersion into another world) or *augmented reality* (conjuring up distal entities in the base space)?

The key point here is to make a distinction between psychological reality and linguistic construal. When I talk about a displacement scenario versus a representation scenario, I am not necessarily concerned with the actual experiences of individual narrators and narratees: this is not a study in the phenomenology of narrative engagement or immersion. What I am looking at is what conceptual scenario most elegantly accounts for certain aspects of linguistic construal. As I explained in Chapter 1, certain elements (such as the use of *today* to refer to a past time frame) seem to impose a displacement scenario, while others (temporal compression) suggest a representation scenario. This need not necessarily reflect the actual experience of an individual conceptualiser.

With this in mind, I maintain that the mimetic use of the present for preterite in Classical Greek is best explained in terms of a representation



scenario. As I noted in Section 1.8 of Chapter 1, the Classical Greek present for preterite is never used with the adverb *vũv* in its temporal sense 'now' (this is different for Latin, see Kroon [2002]), nor have I found other usages of deictic expressions that impose an 'allocentric perspective' in narrative descriptions in the corpus. Combined with the fact that the pretence of presence at the scene is often broken in other ways in dramatic narrative (temporal compression, narratorial comments, etc.), I believe that the representation scenario constitutes the most economic explanation for making sense of the use of the present for preterite here from a linguistic point of view.

As a final illustration of these points, let us reconsider Kramer's narrative for a moment (Chapter 1, Section 1.6). When Kramer recreates the baseball match in Jerry's room by gesturing, it is more economical, in my view, to assume that Kramer presupposes the virtual presence of the baseball field in the room than to assume a transportation of the conceptualisers to the baseball field. The former interpretation is supported by Kramer's constant use of the phrase *you know* throughout the narrative, as illustrated in the following passage:

- (38) Next thing both benches **are cleared**, *you know*. A brouhaha **breaks out** between the guys in the camp, *you know*, and the old Yankee players, and as I'm **trying** to get Moose Skowron off one of my teammates, *you know*, somebody **pulls** me from behind, *you know*, and I turned around and I popped him.

The consistent appeal to shared knowledge is a sign that Kramer, as narrator, remains firmly grounded in the actual present and that the conceptual distance to the actual past events is maintained. While I cannot make any definitive claim about the narratees' mental experience as they listen to this narrative, from a linguistic standpoint the representation scenario is the most economical way to make sense of Kramer's use of the present for preterite. At what point this (linguistic) distinction between representation and displacement breaks down in conversational narrative is an interesting question for future research.