6. Future Tenses

The past is remembered, the future may only be imagined (cf. Chafe 1993:198). Although this contrast between past and future seems perfectly logical, the future may be presented by a narrator with a larger degree of control than the label ‘imagining’ suggests. This is especially the case when the future is anticipated upon within the boundaries of a work of fiction. This chapter discusses the use of future tense forms in the *Aeneid*, which indeed reflect imagination, but mostly display announcements.

The narrator of the *Aeneid* uses future tenses in talking about his own direct or more distant future and in talking about the future of reference time. Apart from the narrator, several characters use the future tenses, either to announce or to imagine the future.

The amount of indicative simple future forms in the *Aeneid* is 418, the amount of future perfect forms 36. Most of these occur in direct speech: 401 future simple forms and 34 future perfect forms. Although tense forms in direct speech are not part of the corpus of this research, 56 future simple tense forms and four future perfect tense forms in direct speech will be included in this discussion on account of the fact that they are part of a “future narrative”.

The semantic value of the simple future is to express posteriority with respect to the base (Pinkster 1990:226). The semantic value of the future perfect is to express that the state of affairs is anterior to a moment in the future of the base (Pinkster 1990:226).

### 6.1. Report Mode: Imagining and Announcing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse Mode</th>
<th>Base Time of narration</th>
<th>Reference time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Report</td>
<td>Transposed Report</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registering</td>
<td>Directing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>Transposed Narrative</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Transposed Description</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The report mode consists of states of affairs that are presented in relation to the time of narration.

The simple future tense expresses posteriority with respect to the base (Pinkster 1990:226). Thus, the narrator uses the future tense to refer to a state of affairs in his own future in report.

Despite the fact that the future is, strictly speaking, uncontrollable, there is only one instance in the *Aeneid* in which the narrator indeed has no control over the states of affairs denoted by means of the future tense. The narrator looks beyond the scope of his own time and expresses the hope that his narrative, and thereby the names of Euryalus and Nisus, will remain known as long as Rome exists.

**Example (1)**, 9.446 – 449

Fortunati ambo! si quid mea carmina possunt, nulla dies umquam memori uos eximet aeo, dum domus Aeneae Capitoli immobile saxum accolet imperiumque pater Romanus habebit.

Happy pair! If my poetry has any power, no day shall ever blot you from the memory of time, so long as the house of Aeneas dwells on the Capitol’s unshaken rock, and the Father of Rome holds sovereign sway!

This apostrophe functions as a conclusion to the episode of the adventures of Nisus and Euryalus. The narrator marks the dramatic ending of the lives and appearance of Nisus and Euryalus in the *Aeneid*.

As said, example (1) is exceptional, since the future tense is usually used by the narrator to announce what is to come in his story. These announcements are all reported first person verb forms concerned with the immediate future, for they are meta-communicative expressions that refer to what the narrator will do in a few moments, like *expediam, reuocabo* and *dicam* in the example below.199

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198 For the use of the future tenses in non-narrative texts see Kühner-Stegmann (1012:II.1,142ff); Leumann-Hofmann-Szantyr, (1965: 309ff); Pinkster (1990:226).

199 Other examples of such announcements are found in 7.733 and 10.793.
Example (2), 7.37 – 44
Nunc age, qui reges, Erato, quae tempora, rerum quis Latio antiquo fuerit status, aduena classem cum primum Ausoniis exercitus appellit oris, expediam, et primae reuocabo exordia pugnae, tu uatem, tu, diua, mone. dicam horrida bella, dicam acies actosque animis in funera reges, Tyrrenenamque manum totamque sub arma coactam Hesperiam. maior rerum mihi nascitur ordo, maius opus moueo.

Awake now, Erato! Who were the kings, what were the times, what the state of affairs in ancient Latium, when first that foreign army landend on Ausonia’s shore – this will I unfold; and the prelude of the opening strife will I recall. And you, goddess, prompt your bard! I will tell of grim wars, will tell of battle array, and princes in their valour rushing upon death – of Tyrrhenian bands, and all Hesperia mustered in arms. Greater is the story that opens before me; greater is the task that I attempt.

The narrator here uses an invocation of Erato to emphasize the start of the second half of the Aeneid. The future tenses – together with their objects – function to explicitly announce the content of this second half, the war in Italy.

A more indirect way of announcing what is to come in the story world is found in the simile below. Aeneas is, as he ‘flies’ over the battlefield, compared with a tempest. By introducing farmers who fear what this tempest will bring, the narrator also introduces the future victims of Aeneas.

Example (3), 12.450 – 458
ille uolat campoque atrum rapit agmen aperto. qualis ubi ad terras abrupto sidere nimbus it mare per medium (miseris, heu, praesencia longe horrescunt corda agricolis: dabit ille ruinas arboribus stragemque satis, ruet omnia late), ante uolant sonitumque ferunt ad litora uenti: talis in adversos ductor Rhoeteius hostis agmen agit, densi cuneis se quisque coactis adglomerant.

Aeneas swoops ahead and races his dark column over the open plain. As when a tempest bursts, and a storm cloud moves towards land over the deep sea, the hearts of hapless husbandmen, alas! know it from afar and shudder – it will bring downfall to trees and havoc to crops, it will overthrow everything far and wide – before it the winds fly, and carry their voices shoreward: just so the Rhoetian chief brings up his band full against the foe; densely they gather, one and all, to his side in close-packed columns.

The future tenses express the content of what frightens the farmers during the moment of comparison, and, as a result, the simile gives the reader more information about the story world than the sentence preceding the simile. The future tense forms announce what Aeneas will inflict on his victims: ruet omnia late. The narrator uses these future tense forms to give attention to the great deeds of Aeneas, while at the same time evoking a feeling of compassion for his victims (Williams 1983:168).200

Character narrators also imagine their future and sometimes do so at the end of a story told by them. Usually character stories end with a description of their present situation (e.g. Palinurus in 6.362), but sometimes the character narrator also looks ahead, as Euander does in the example below (cf. Williams 1983:151).201

200 This simile is based on a Homeric simile (II.4.275ff), but the evaluative elements (miseris, heu) are Vergil’s invention (Conington 1963). These future tense forms are the only future tense forms in a simile in the Aeneid; usually the narrator does not exceed the boundaries of the moment of comparison and uses only present tense forms.

201 The character stories of Venus (1.365) and Sinon (2.182) also end with the expression of an anticipation on the future.
Euander has told the story about Hercules and Cacus and concludes by saying that from the day that Hercules killed Cacus the inhabitants of the area have been worshipping Hercules. At the end of his story, he expresses the expectation, by means of the future tense forms *dicetur* and *erit*, that this altar will always be there.

Although Euander expresses his expectation with a large amount of certainty, he cannot be absolutely sure that it will become true. Euander is a character who does not have the knowledge of the narrator nor the predicting powers of some other characters. Characters who do have predicting powers in the *Aeneid* are Jupiter in book 1 (1.257ff), Helenus in book 3 (3.374ff) and Anchises in book 6 (6.724ff), and when they use the future tense they do not present mere expectations of the future. Instead, the clairvoyant characters give *predictions* of this future. Helenus’ predictions are instructions to Aeneas and are, as such, direct speech and irrelevant in a research on the narrative use of tenses. The predictions of Jupiter and Anchises, however, deserve a brief digression since they seem to take the form of stories.

### 6.2 Stories of the Future

Anchises tells Aeneas about the future of the Roman race in book 6, and Jupiter tells Venus about it in book 1. These predictions have a remarkable form: despite the use of the future tense the states of affairs are presented in connection to each other rather than to the time of speech. Thereby, they constitute a sequence of successive events and situations or, put differently, a ‘future time line’. This is illustrated by the example below in which different ‘future reference times’ can be discerned: Jupiter, the ‘narrator’, makes reference time advance from *explebit* to the reference time of *transferet* and *muniet*, then proceeds to *hic regnabitur* and ends this reference time with *donec dabit* and finally, with *inde*, arrives in the last reference time of this short narrative, that of *excipiet, condet and dicet*.}

The future tense has become the basic tense of this story. This prediction of Jupiter and Anchises’ story about the future in book 6 are part of a strategy of the main narrator to incorporate events from outside his story world. The main story of the *Aeneid* concerns the time span of Aeneas’ travelling from Troy to Italy and the Italic war. In order to include the highlights of the history into his story, the narrator of the *Aeneid* uses, for instance, the description of the shield in book and this ‘narrative’ use of the future tense. By making his
characters predict the future of the story world the narrator includes his own past in the story, since this future of the story world is, of course, his own past.

6.3 Transposed Report Mode

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Base</th>
<th>Time of narration</th>
<th>Reference time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Report</td>
<td>Transposed Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Transposed Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The future tense is rarely found outside direct speech and report in the Aeneid. As a matter of fact, only two simple future tense forms and one future perfect form are found in transposed report. I will discuss these below (example (7)).

First, however, I will discuss a textual problem in book 9 in which a future tense form is one of the possibilities in the manuscripts. The subject of this excerpt is the handing out of prices after a running contest. Euryalus has won the contest, and was followed by Helymus and Diores, but only because Nisus made Salius fall. Therefore, Salius claims a price.

In the relative clause qui...honores (346-347), the narrator looks back at the states of affairs subiit and uenit, referring to the moment that Diores passed the finish line in third place (praemia ultima). Since these states of affairs are anterior to reference time, they are presented by perfect tense forms. Diores expects to have to hand in his price if, after reference time, Salius will be treated as the winner of the first price, leaving the unrewarding fourth place to Diores. In that case, the effort of Diores in the past of reference time will have been in vain (frustra). So, whereas the perfect tense forms subiit and uenit refer to states of affairs that did happen and are anterior to reference time, the adverb frustra can be true only after reference time, even after the occurrence of the hypothetical honores reddere.

The manuscripts provide three possibilities in 5.347: reddentur (printed in the OCT), reddantur and redduntur. The posteriority of the state of affairs with respect to reference time leaves no room for the present tense variant redduntur. The choice between the subjunctive reddantur and the future reddentur is more difficult; both the future indicative and the present subjunctive allow for the fact that the state of affairs reddere has not happened yet. Nevertheless, I would choose to read the present subjunctive since it is still a mere possibility that Salius will be given the price he deserves, from the point of view of the reference time of

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202 Cf. Williams (1965) who provides an argument to read redduntur (although he eventually keeps reddentur): “the following verbs in the present tense, manent and movet, are similarly future in meaning”. Apart from the fact that these present tense forms occur in direct speech and should therefore not be presented as comparable to reddentur, these present tense forms are valid in the future simply because they are valid in Aeneas’ present and do not stop being valid after this present (manent because of its meaning, and movet because of the power of Aeneas – no one will touch this price if Aeneas says it is not to be moved). As such, they are not comparable to the state of affairs reddere, since this state of affairs does not take place in reference time continuing after reference time, but, instead, is completely posterior to it.
Diores’ protests (*proclamat*). The present subjunctive emphasizes the possibility of this course of events, leaving open the possibility of another course of events. Besides, there are no parallels in the *Aeneid* of a future indicative in a *si*-clause, whereas there are some parallels for a present subjunctive indicating a possibility in the future of reference time (1.18 and 12.761).

The undisputed future tense forms that are posterior to reference time are found in the scene in which Turnus kills Pallas. The narrator uses the future tense in this scene to hint at Turnus’ own death in which the belt of Pallas will play an important role (12.941ff).

Example (7), 10.501 – 505

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nescia mens hominum fati sortisque futurae
et seruare modum rebus sublata secundis!
Turno tempus erit magno cum optauerit emptum
intactum Pallanta, et cum spolia ista diemque oderit.
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O mind of man, knowing not fate or coming doom or how to keep bounds when uplifted with favouring fortune! To Turnus shall come the hour when for a great price he will long to have bought an unscathed Pallas, and when he will abhor those spoils and that day.

Usually, announcements on the further course of the story are made by means of reported clauses in the perfect tense. In such cases, the narrator takes the time of narration as a base, but here he takes reference time as a base and presents his knowledge about the outcome of the events from this point of view (Pinkster 1999: 707). So, instead of saying something like “later on – as we know now – Turnus regretted this choice”, he chooses to present this announcement from the reference time in which Turnus admires the spoils taken from Paris. By taking this time as a base from which to announce Turnus’ later regret, the narrator emphasizes the contrast between his own knowledge (and that of his audience) and Turnus’ unawareness of the consequences of his actions in a much more effective way than a reported clause would have done (Leumann-Hofmann-Szantyr 1965:310). This way of presentation makes this one of the clearest examples of the mix of displaced knowledge and immediate deixis (base in reference time) in the *Aeneid* (displaced immediacy, see §1.2.1).

### 6.4 Conclusion

The future tense is, of course, not a tense typical for narrative. Nevertheless, it is used several times in the *Aeneid*, sometimes referring to the future of a character narrator, sometimes referring to the future of the main narrator or even referring to the future of reference time. In these cases, the discourse mode is usually report or transposed report, although also two ‘future narratives’ may be distinguished in the *Aeneid*. The overview of the future tenses and discourse modes is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse modes and the future tense</th>
<th>Future Simple</th>
<th>Future Perfect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Report</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Future narrative”</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transposed report</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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203 E.g. 7.756 – 758 *sed non Dardaniae medicari cuspidis ictum/ eualuit neque eum iuueric uulnera cantus/ sommiferi et Marsis quaesitae montibus herbae.* (Transl.: but he availed not to heal the stroke of Dardan spearpoint, nor against wound did slumberous charms aid him, or herbs culled on Marsian hills.) (see §3.3 and §8.2.3).

204 The narrator of the *Aeneid* also uses the historical present for such announcements (in 10.438, see §2.6)