

DOES DETACHED PARTICIPLE CLAUSE HAVE NO TENSE OR TEMPORAL RELATION WITH ITS MATRIX CLAUSE?

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The discussion so far shows two things about *ing-clauses* or *detached participle clauses* (DPCs): they have no tenses and do not show any temporal relation with their main clauses. Haiman, for example, (1985, 217) claims that the tense of DPC is open, whereas Givon (1993:302) sees that DPCs display clear features of low finiteness in which their tense-aspect-and modality is reduced. Jansen and Lentz (2001:287) also believe that DPCs are lack of internal structure, either less syntax (no subject) or morphology (no tense forms), while Thompson (1983:45) puts forward that DPCs do not explicitly express any logical or temporal relationship with the materials for which they are the background. Using theoretical framework proposed by Declerck (1991), I argue that the tense of *ing-clauses* is not open, but linked to the main clause situations. Consequently, the temporal relation between the two clauses whether anteriority, simultaneity, or posteriority can be determined. The analysis which is based on 250 sentences containing DPCs derived from three narrative texts, *Moby Dick*, *Wuthering Height*, and *Tom Sawyer* implies that in determining temporal relation between a DPC and its matrix clause, different from independent clauses where *temporal subordination* and *shift of temporal domain* are available, in DPCs only the first appears. When temporal subordination applies to DPCs, the best prototype of the relation between the two clauses is simultaneity using similar tenses. The relation in other domains will be explored and conclusion will be drawn further.

INTRODUCTION

So far, the treatment towards the tense of the detached participle clause (DPC) has been inconclusive. Thompson (1983:44) claims that DPC serves as a device that allows the speaker/writer to present certain materials as background against which certain other materials can be put forth as figure. Thompson further says, there is no explicit or logical relationship between DPC and the materials for which it is the background. In other words, Thompson believes that there is no temporal relation between the figure and its background.

In facts, temporal relation has been shown to exist between DPC and its matrix clause. Biber *et.al.* (1999:782) see that a DPC produces difficulties in meaning interpretation. Sentence, “*Watching him as the day went by*, the guilty collector had noticed signs of physical and moral decline.” can be interpreted as simultaneity or causality or in, “Three weekas ago Swedish and Scottish police searched Talb’s flat in Uppsala, *removing fifteen bags of clothing.*” that can be seen as indicating simultaneity or result.

Givon (1993:303) implies that the temporal relation between these two clauses may be simultaneous whether the situations are both nonpunctual (She swam across the pool thinking of her mother.) or punctual (She *plunged into* the pool thinking of her mother.) or sequential anterior also with punctual (*Deciding* not to worry, he stayed at home all day.) and nonpunctual situations (*Finishing* his tax returns, he stayed at home.). However, Givon only indicates anteriority and simultaneity relations. He doesn't indicate why it should be the case if punctuality is not the factor involved. In Jansen and Letnz' (2001:280) terms, Givon does not call upon some linguistics features existing in the text. The question if there is a system controlling this temporal relation is ignored.

Comrie (1985:59) suggests that the, "time reference of English DPC is relative, which is shown by the time reference of the closest finite verb and the time reference of the participle". While the former statement can be true, the latter should be clarified further because detached participle clause does not have its own time reference.

Haiman (1985: 217) claims that a subordinate clause like a DPC has an open tense, meaning that it should not be in the same tense or mood as the matrix sentence. He also claims that it is not tense-iconic with the matrix clause, meaning that the sequence of events does not necessarily correspond to the sequence of clauses. In my understanding, Haiman's first claim about DPC seems to be contradictory with Martin's (1975:485) assertion saying that, "being timeless and moodless, it takes from the final predicate the tense or mood required for the translation". Secondly, disregarding Martin's statement, if it is true that its tense is open, how open. Is it half open or 100 percent open so that there not rule at all there? Thirdly, while it is true that in DPC there is no tense-iconicity in terms of the correspondence between sequence of events with the sequence of clause [or *isocrony* in Jansen and Lentz's (2001:280) terms], I do believe that tense might indicate temporal relation between a DPC and its matrix clause in terms of anteriority, simultaneity, and posteriority. Therefore, in this paper I argue that the tense of a DPC is not open because when we want to interpret it, we have to have an anchor to establish its tense and the anchor is the tense of its matrix clause. My second argument is that using Declerck framework (1991:15), we can establish the tense of a DPC and this tense is iconic in a sense that the system of tense used indicates whether the situations in the two clauses are anterior, simultaneous, or posterior to each other.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In his comprehensive work, Declerck (1991:16) indicates that English tense system can be categorised into past vs nonpast. He distinguishes the *past time sphere*, 'an indefinite length of time which lies completely before t_0 and the nonpast or *present time sphere*, 'an indefinite time span including t_0 . t_0 is temporal zero point, the ultimate origin of all temporal relation expressed in the sentence, i.e. the time to which all situations referred to in the sentence are directly or indirectly related, and which is not itself presented as dependent on any other time.

Declerck t_0 divides the nonpast time sphere into pre-present sector, present sector, and future sector. The past time sphere constitutes one single sector, the past sector. In order to locate a situation in the past, pre-present, present, and future sector, English uses the past tense (I *met* her a few days ago.), the present perfect (*Have* you ever *been* to Venice?), the present (He *lives* on the corner of Russel Square.) and the future tense (There *will* be no one to talk to.).

Other situations may be temporally related to a situation that has been located in a particular sector. In, “John was sad because the referees were not willing to publish the article he had submitted.” *were not willing* indicates that the situation in the first *because*-clause is simultaneous with the matrix clause situation, and *had submitted* indicates that the situation in the second *because*-clause is anterior to the main clause situation. The time interval taken up by a situation (examples (1), (2), (3), and (4) or by a number of situations [example (5)] is called a *temporal domain*. The past domain in (5) thus comprises the time of the three situations referred to (Declerck, 1991:20). When tenses are used to *establish a domain*, they are called *absolute* tenses. The special verb forms used to indicate the temporal order between situations belonging to the same domain are called *relative* tenses. The process whereby particular verb forms are used to express the temporal order between situations belonging to the same domain is referred to as *temporal subordination*. Instead of incorporating a new situation into the existing domain, it is also often possible to relate it directly to t_0 as shown in, “June said that Susan is pregnant.”

The situation in the second clause in (6) is not temporally subordinated to the situation of its matrix clause. If it had been the case, the speaker would have used *was*, which would have indicated that the situation in the second clause is posterior to that in the first clause. Instead, the speaker relates the situation in the second clause to the temporal-zero point. This procedure is called a *shift of domain*.

Each absolute sector has its own system of tenses to express the domain internal relations created by the process of temporal subordination. Declerck distinguishes a domain established by a perfect which gets an indefinite interpretation and one established by a perfect which gets a continuative interpretation. In the former case, a situation which does not last up to t_0 is located in pre-present sector. When other situations are subordinated to it, the focus shifts from the fact that it took place to the time when it took place, which implies that the link with t_0 is disregarded. Declerck argues that to go on talking about the situation, the *past domain* is resorted to (past tense for simultaneity, past perfect for anteriority, conditional past for posteriority). In continuative perfect domain, past tense and present perfect are used to express anteriority, present perfect and present tense to express simultaneity, and future tense to express posteriority. In future domain, past tense and present perfect are used to express anteriority, present tense to express simultaneity, and future tense to express posteriority.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There are 201 past simple sentences in the data. From that number, 155 of them (77%) meet the criteria of temporal subordination of anteriority, simultaneity and posteriority as suggested by Declerck (1991). When these three temporal relations are applied to each of the sentences, all possibilities such as past perfect (anteriority), past tense (simultaneity) and conditional past (posteriority) are acceptable like in (1a), (1b), (1c) or (2a), (2b), (2c). However, when the possible sentences are taken from area beyond temporal subordination possibilities like (1d) and (2d), they are not acceptable. This tendency can be seen in both detached participle functioning as adverb (1) and as adjective (2).

(1) Slowly [[crossing]] the deck from the scuttle, Ahab leaned over the side,

(1a) When he slowly crossed the deck from the scuttle, Ahab leaned over the side,

(1b) When he had slowly crossed the deck from the scuttle, Ahab leaned over the side,

(1c) When he would slowly cross the deck from the scuttle, Ahab leaned over the side,

(1d) *When he crosses the deck from the scuttle, Ahab leaned over the side,

(2) So cried Ahab, once more hailing a ship showing English colours, [[bearing]] down under the stern.

(2a) So cried Ahab, once more hailing a ship showing English colours, which bore down under the stern.

(2b) So cried Ahab, once more hailing a ship showing English colours, which had born down under the stern.

(2c) So cried Ahab, once more hailing a ship showing English colours, which would bear down under the stern.

(2d) *So cried Ahab, once more hailing a ship showing English colours, which bears down under the stern.

In (1), the act of *crossing* can be simultaneous (1a), anterior (1b), or posterior (1c) to *leaning over* using past tense, past perfect, and conditional past. In contrast, as the consequence of the absence of lexical adverbs of time, present tense cannot be used to represent any of the relation. Here, a shift of temporal domain is only possible when sufficient context is fulfilled. The same situation can be observed in (2) between the situation in the matrix clause *cried* and that in the detached participle *bear down*.

The rest of the data although the number is not as significant as that of supporting temporal subordination phenomena, show an interesting variation. Firstly, to indicate anteriority in past sector, conditional past is used. However, this tense marker does not always work if the context makes it clear that both the DPC and its matrix clause should be simultaneous as in (3c), or in sequential-anterior relation as in 4c below. There are 18% cases in which conditional past cannot be used to indicate posteriority relation in past sector.

(3) [[Standing]], for the most part, on the hallowed precincts of the quarter-deck, they were careful not to speak or rustle their feet.

(3a) When they were standing, for the most part, on the hallowed precincts of the quarterdeck, they were careful not to speak or rustle their feet.

(3b) When they had been standing, for the most part, on the hallowed precincts of the quarterdeck, they were careful not to speak or rustle their feet.

(3c) *When they would be standing, for the most part, on the hallowed precincts of the quarter-deck, they were careful not to speak or rustle their feet.

(3d) *When they stand, for the most part, on the hallowed precincts of the quarterdeck, they were careful not to speak or rustle their feet.

In (3), the verb of the DPC (*standing*) can be simultaneous (past tense) or anterior (past perfect) to the verb in the matrix clause (*were careful not to speak*). On the contrary, past conditional cannot be used to express posteriority because both *standing* and *were careful* can be logically discerned as simultaneous.

(4) [[Moving]] on, I at last came to a dim sort of out-hanging light not far from the docks.

(4a) When I moved on, I at last came to a dim sort of out-hanging light not far from the docks.

(4b) When I had moved on, I at last came to a dim sort of out-hanging light not far from the docks.

(4c) *When I would move on, I at last came to a dim sort of out-hanging light not far from the docks.

(4d) *When I move on, I at last came to a dim sort of out-hanging light not far from the docks.

In (4), it is possible to interpret *moving* as both simultaneous and anterior to *coming*. However, it is impossible to think that the act of *coming* takes place before the act of *moving*.

Secondly, the types of verb also play a role in limiting the application of temporal subordination. When the situation of the verb is punctual like in 5 and 6, its clause tends to be anterior to its matrix clause as observed below.

(5) [[Quitting]] the good city of old Manhatto, I duly arrived in New Bedford.

(5a) When I had quit the good city of old Manhatto, I duly arrived in New Bedford.

(5b) *When I quit the good city of old Manhatto, I duly arrived in New Bedford.

(5c) *When I would quit the good city of old Manhatto, I duly arrived in New Bedford.

(5d) *When I quit (present) the good city of old Manhatto, I duly arrived in New Bedford.

(5e) *When I have quit the good city of old Manhatto, I duly arrived in New Bedford.

In (5), either *quit* or *arrive* is punctual and telic, and the only possible relation between them is anteriority. The two situations took place in a short period of time so that it is unlikely to be simultaneous and it also quite impossible for *quit* to take place after *arrive* and that there is no posteriority relation here.

6) [[Remembering]] the embalmed head, at first I almost thought that this black manikin was a real baby preserved in some similar manner.

(6a) When I remembered the embalmed head, at first I almost thought that this black manikin was a real baby preserved in some similar manner.

(6b) When I had remembered the embalmed head, at first I almost thought that this black manikin was a real baby preserved in some similar manner.

(6c) *When I would remember the embalmed head, at first I almost thought that this black manikin was a real baby preserved in some similar manner.

(6d) *When I remember the embalmed head, at first I almost thought that this black manikin was a real baby preserved in some similar manner.

In (6), *remember* in the DPC is punctual and in an anterior relation with the situation of the matrix clause. In the case of *remember* as reported by Givon (1993:302), there is a tendency to interpret the DPC at the beginning of a sentence as *sequential-anterior*, while the one coming at the end of the sentence as simultaneous with its matrix clause.

Thirdly, to indicate anteriority relation in past sector, past perfect is used. However, in certain circumstances, contexts may hinder this situation like in (7) in which the situation in matrix clause is anterior to that in the DPC. Likewise, the same situation may happen when the DPC situation should be posterior to that of its matrix clause (8), or simultaneous (9).

(7) He lighted a candle and held it towards me, [[offering]] to lead the way.

(7a) He lighted a candle and held it towards me, and would offer to lead the way.

(7b) He lighted a candle and held it towards me, and offered to lead the way.

(7c) *He lighted a candle and held it towards me, and offers to lead the way.

(7d) *He lighted a candle and held it towards me, and had offered to lead the way.

In (7), *offering to lead the way* is best interpreted to take place after *the candle is lighted and held towards me* (7a). It can also be said that the process of *lighting, holding, and offering* happen simultaneously (7b). However, it is unlikely to be true that the act *offering* takes place anterior to the two other situations (7d).

(8) If it pleased me, he would dress first and then leave me to dress afterwards, [[leaving]] the whole apartment to myself.

(8a) If it pleased me, he would dress first and then leave me to dress afterwards, which left the whole apartment to myself.

(8b) If it pleased me, he would dress first and then leave me to dress afterwards, which would leave the whole apartment to myself.

(8c) *If it pleased me, he would dress first and then leave me to dress afterwards, which leaves the whole apartment to myself.

(8d) *If it pleased me, he would dress first and then leave me to dress afterwards, which had left the whole apartment to myself.

In (8), the act of *leaving me to dress afterwards* can be considered as simultaneous (8a) or posterior (8b) to *leaving the whole apartment to myself*. However, it is rather unlikely to say that *leaving the whole apartment to myself* is anterior to *leaving me to dress afterwards* (8d).

(9) He suddenly thrust out his face fiercely, [[snuffing]] up the sea air as a sagacious ship's dog will, in drawing nigh to some barbarous isle.

(9a) He suddenly thrust out his face fiercely, and snuffed up the sea air, as a sagacious ship's dog will, in drawing nigh to some barbarous isle.

(9b) *He suddenly thrust out his face fiercely, and had snuffed up the sea air as a sagacious ship's dog will, in drawing nigh to some barbarous isle.

(9c) *He suddenly thrust out his face fiercely, and would snuff up the sea air as a sagacious ship's dog will, in drawing nigh to some barbarous isle.

(9d) *He suddenly thrust out his face fiercely, and snuffs up the sea air as a sagacious ship's dog will, in drawing nigh to some barbarous isle.

In (9), the best interpretation is that thrust and snuffed is simultaneous (9a). Both anterior and posterior relation such as in (9b) and (9c) are impossible.

Fourthly, to indicate a simultaneous situation in past sector, the simple past tense is used. However, contexts may hinder the case such as when the verb in the DPC is punctual (10).

(10) [[Taking]] out his spectacles, he rubbed them with his great yellow bandana handkerchief, and putting them on very carefully, came out of the wigwam, and leaning stiffly over the bulwarks, took a good long look at Queequeg.

(10a) *When he took out his spectacles, he rubbed them with his great yellow bandana handkerchief, and putting them on very carefully, came out of the wigwam, and leaning stiffly over the bulwarks, took a good long look at Queequeg.

- (10b) When he had taken out his spectacles, he rubbed them with his great yellow bandana handkerchief, and putting them on very carefully, came out of the wigwam, and leaning stiffly over the bulwarks, took a good long look at Queequeg.
- (10c) *When he would take out his spectacles, he rubbed them with his great yellow bandana handkerchief, and putting them on very carefully, came out of the wigwam, and leaning stiffly over the bulwarks, took a good long look at Queequeg.
- (10d) *When he takes out his spectacles, he rubbed them with his great yellow bandana handkerchief, and putting them on very carefully, came out of the wigwam, and leaning stiffly over the bulwarks, took a good long look at Queequeg.

In (10), the act of *rubbing* is only likely after *taking out* (sequential-anterior) as in (10b) and that posteriority (10c) and simultaneity (10a) are not possible.

In expressing the relation between a detached participle clause and its matrix clause in *pre-present* sector, there are two choices available to us. First we use a shift of temporal perspective in which we treat the pre-present sector as if it were from the past sectors. Secondly, we can treat the situation in this sector as reaching up to t_0 (temporal zero point). In the latter case, we can use past tense or simple present to express anteriority, present simple or present perfect to express simultaneity, and future tense to express posteriority. Constraints in using this framework may be found past tense (11a) and present perfect (11b) to express anteriority, and future tense to express posteriority (11c).

- (11) On Tower-hill, as you go down to the London docks, you may have seen a crippled beggar (or kedger, as the sailors say) holding a painted board before him, [[representing]] the tragic scene in which he lost his leg.
- (11a) *On Tower-hill, as you go down to the London docks, you may have seen a crippled beggar (or kedger, as the sailors say) holding a painted board before him, which represented the tragic scene in which he lost his leg.
- (11b) *On Tower-hill, as you go down to the London docks, you may have seen a crippled beggar (or kedger, as the sailors say) holding a painted board before him, which has represented the tragic scene in which he lost his leg.
- (11c) *On Tower-hill, as you go down to the London docks, you may have seen a crippled beggar (or kedger, as the sailors say) holding a painted board before him, which will represent the tragic scene in which he lost his leg.
- (11d) On Tower-hill, as you go down to the London docks, you may have seen a crippled beggar (or kedger, as the sailors say) holding a painted board before him, which represents the tragic scene in which he lost his leg.

The data also show that simple present sometimes cannot be used to express simultaneity when the relation between the DPC and its matrix clause is clearly sequential-anterior (12c). The only relation that seems mostly acceptable in many cases is simultaneity using the same tense, present perfect tense.

(12) And thus have these naked Nantucketers, these sea hermits, [[issuing]] from their ant-hill in the sea, overrun and conquered the watery world like so many Alexanders; parcelling out among them the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian oceans, as the three pirate powers* did Poland.

(12a) And thus *have* these naked Nantucketers, these sea hermits, which issued from their ant-hill in the sea, *overrun* and *conquered* the watery world like so many Alexanders; parcelling out among them the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian oceans, as the three pirate powers* did Poland.

(12b) And thus have these naked Nantucketers, these sea hermits, which has issued from their ant-hill in the sea, overrun and conquered the watery world like so many Alexanders; parcelling out among them the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian oceans, as the three pirate powers* did Poland.

(12c) *And thus have these naked Nantucketers, these sea hermits, which issue from their ant-hill in the sea, overrun and conquered the watery world like so many Alexanders; parcelling out among them the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian oceans, as the three pirate powers* did Poland.

(12d) And thus have these naked Nantucketers, these sea hermits, which will issue from their ant-hill in the sea, overrun and conquered the watery world like so many Alexanders; parcelling out among them the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian oceans, as the three pirate powers* did Poland.

Looking at (12), it goes without saying that in the pre-present sector, the only possible relation between the DPC and its matrix clause is simultaneity and that we can say that this is the best prototype of the relation in this sector.

In the present sector, while simple present is used to express simultaneity, and future tense to express posteriority, past tense and present perfect are used to express anteriority. From these four possibilities, constraints are found in the expression of anteriority in which future tense cannot be used (13).

(13) [[Hearing]] him foolishly fumbling there, the Captain laughs lowly to himself, and mutters something about the doors of convicts' cells being never allowed to be locked within.

- (13a) When he hears him foolishly fumbling there, the Captain laughs lowly to himself, and mutters something about the doors of convicts' cells being never allowed to be locked within.
- (13b) When he has heard him foolishly fumbling there, the Captain laughs lowly to himself, and mutters something about the doors of convicts' cells being never allowed to be locked within.
- (13c) *When he will hear him foolishly fumbling there, the Captain laughs lowly to himself, and mutters something about the doors of convicts' cells being never allowed to be locked within.
- (13d) *When he heard him foolishly fumbling there, the Captain laughs lowly to himself, and mutters something about the doors of convicts' cells being never allowed to be locked within.
- (13e) *When he had heard him foolishly fumbling there, the Captain laughs lowly to himself, and mutters something about the doors of convicts' cells being never allowed to be locked within.

Being a punctual verb, *hear* should be in sequential-anterior relation to its matrix sentence. We can logically say that *laughing* is a consequence of *hearing him foolishly fumbling there*, but not on the other way around. Therefore, making *hearing* posterior to *laughing* is unlikely.

To show anteriority in present sector, past tense and present perfect can be used. However, to meet this function, the simple past tense requires an explicit lexical time marker to build the context such as in "I believe that she went home late last night."

- (14) Ahab [[moving]] to go on deck; Pip catches him by the hand to follow.
- (14a) When Ahab is moving to go on deck; Pip catches him by the hand to follow.
- (14b) *When Ahab was moving to go on deck; Pip catches him by the hand to follow.
- (14c) When Ahab has moved to go on deck; Pip catches him by the hand to follow.
- (14d) When Ahab will move to go on deck; Pip catches him by the hand to follow.

In (14), problem does not emerge when trying to use present tense (14a), present perfect (14c), and future (14d) to respectively express simultaneity, anteriority, and posteriority. In contrast, in (14b), the act of *moving* and *catching* should be at the same temporal domain and shift of domain is not possible. Shift of temporal domain may produce acceptable sentences if the DPC functions as an adjective (15).

- 15) Is this the still militant old man, [[standing]] at the corners of the three kingdoms, on all hands coercing alms of beggars?

- 15a) Is this the still militant old man, who stands at the corners of the three kingdoms, on all hands coercing alms of beggars?
- 15b) Is this the still militant old man, who has stood at the corners of the three kingdoms, on all hands coercing alms of beggars?
- 15c) Is this the still militant old man, who stood at the corners of the three kingdoms, on all hands coercing alms of beggars?
- 15d) Is this the still militant old man, who will stand at the corners of the three kingdoms, on all hands coercing alms of beggars?
- 15d) Is this the still militant old man, who had stood at the corners of the three kingdoms, on all hands coercing alms of beggars?

In future sector, simultaneity and anteriority are respectively expressed by present tense and past tense, whereas posteriority by future tense. Different from cases in previous three sectors in which the constraints are varied, in future sector the only challenge is found in the use of past tense to express anteriority (16c) in which both *consume* and *carry* are future plans that will take place only simultaneously.

- (16) Some harpooners will consume almost an entire morning in this business, [[*carrying*]] the line high aloft and then reeving it downwards through a block towards the tub, so as in the act of coiling to free it from all possible wrinkles and twists.
- (16a) Some harpooners will consume almost an entire morning in this business, in which they will carry the line high aloft and then reeving it downwards through a block towards the tub, so as in the act of coiling to free it from all possible wrinkles and twists.
- (16b) Some harpooners will consume almost an entire morning in this business, in which they carry the line high aloft and then reeving it downwards through a block towards the tub, so as in the act of coiling to free it from all possible wrinkles and twists.
- (16c) *Some harpooners will consume almost an entire morning in this business, in which they carried the line high aloft and then reeving it downwards through a block towards the tub, so as in the act of coiling to free it from all possible wrinkles and twists.
- (16d) *Some harpooners will consume almost an entire morning in this business, in which they had carried the line high aloft and then reeving it downwards through a block towards the tub, so as in the act of coiling to free it from all possible wrinkles and twists.

CONCLUSION

In summary, we have seen that the tense of a detached participle clause (DPC) is not that “open”. In fact, our interpretation about the tense to express temporal relation between the two situations is systematic with the situation of the main as an anchor and that in DPC as controlled. For example, if the matrix sentence is in simple past, the only possible tense in DPC is past perfect to express anteriority, past tense to express simultaneity, and conditional past to express posteriority. Our choice is NOT really open because we cannot use present tense (shift of temporal domain) to express any of the three possible relations. The data also show that our option is actually getting limited since the best prototype of the three possibilities is the one which is the same as that of matrix clause situation where the least constraints are found. To this end, we see that there is a correspondence between the tense used in the system and the temporal relation it represents so that detached participle is tense-
iconic.

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