

## The New Historical Stylistics

### Case-study: the origins of free indirect style (charting a stylistic change)

for fuller discussion of this case-study, see Adamson, S.M. (1994) 'From empathetic deixis to empathetic narrative: stylisation and (de-)subjectivisation as processes of language change'. In *Transactions of the Philological Society* 92.1, 55-88 [reprinted, with slight changes in *Subjectivity and Subjectivisation* ed. D.Stein & S.Wright, CUP, 1995]

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#### 1. Varieties of style indirect libre (free indirect style / empathetic narrative)

##### **1a) represented speech:**

She should always send for Perry, if the child appeared in the slightest degree disordered, were it only for a moment. She could not be too soon alarmed, nor send for Perry too often. It was a pity, perhaps, that he had not come last night; for, though the child seemed well now - very well considering - it would probably have been better if Perry had seen it.

##### **1b) represented consciousness:**

Annie was almost crying. It had been such a nice day up to now, and now everything was going wrong. To cover her whimpering sniffs, she took up the tray and went with it down the stairs into the kitchen.

Mr Marble eyed the whisky bottle. He felt he needed some, despite the fact that he had already had three or four -- or was it five or six? -- whiskies that day. He was very tired, very, very tired, and his head ached. Just as it ached this time yesterday. No, he didn't want to think about yesterday.

##### **1c) represented perception:**

The other three all lay flat in the cockpit now. Harry sat on the steering seat. He was looking ahead, steering out the channel, past the opening into the sub-base now, with the notice board to yachts and the green blinker, out away from the jetty, past the fort now, past the red blinker; he looked back. The big Cuban had a green box of shells out of his pocket and was filling clips. The gun lay by his side and he was filling clips without looking at them, filling by feel, looking back over the stern. The others were all looking astern, except the one that was watching him.

#### 2. the WAS-NOW paradox

- |                           |                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| a) Tomorrow was Saturday  | a) John now wrote novels  |
| b) Tomorrow is Saturday   | b) John now writes novels |
| c) Yesterday was Thursday | c) John once wrote novels |

#### 3. the WAS-WHEN variable

Charles was asleep

NOW (now, today, at this time)

THEN (then, that day, at that time)

#### 4. degrees of narrative empathy (the scale of now-fulness) in four proto-novels:

	WAS-NOW: WAS-THEN
<i>Grace Abounding</i>	67 %
<i>Arcadia</i>	31%
<i>Unfortunate Traveller</i>	31%
<i>Pilgrim's Progress</i>	29%

5. degrees of narrative empathy (the scale of now-fulness) in first-person narratives:

	WAS-NOW: WAS-THEN
Bunyan ( <i>Grace Abounding</i> , 1666)	67%
Turner ( <i>Choice Experiences</i> , 1653)	48%
Powell ( <i>The Life and Death</i> , 1671)	42%
Nashe ( <i>Unfortunate Traveller</i> , 1594)	31%
Baxter ( <i>Reliquiae Baxterianae</i> , 1668)	26%
Hakluyt ( <i>Principal Navigations</i> , 1589)	15%

6. Bunyan's narrative plan:

It is very profitable for Christians to be often calling to mind the very beginnings of grace with their souls... Oh! the remembrance of my great sins, of my great temptations, and of my great fear of perishing for ever! They bring afresh into my mind the remembrance of my great help, my great supports from heaven, and the great grace that God extended to such a wretch as I... My dear children, call to mind the former days, and years of ancient times: remember also your songs in the night, and commune with your own heart... Yea, look diligently, and leave no corner therein unsearched for that treasure hid, even the treasure of your first and second experience of the grace of God towards you. Remember, I say, the word that first lay hold upon you: remember your terrors of conscience, and fear of death and hell: remember also your tears and prayers to God; yea, how you sighed under every hedge for mercy. Have you never a hill Mizar to remember? have you forgot the close, the milk-house, the stable, the barn and the like, where God did visit your souls?

7. Bunyan's narrative style:

And now was I both a burthen and a terror to myself; nor did I ever so know, as now, what it was to be weary of my life and yet afraid to die. Oh, how gladly now would I have been anybody but myself! anything but a man! and in any condition but my own!.. But Oh, how did my soul at this time prize the preservation that God did set about his people! Ah, how safely did I see them walk whom God had hedged in! They were within his care, protection and special providence: though they were full as bad as I, by nature; yet, because he loved them, he would not suffer them to fall without the range of his mercy: But as for me, I was gone, I had done it; he would not preserve me, nor keep me: but suffered me, because I was a reprobate, to fall as I had done. Now did those blessed places that speak of God's keeping his people, shine like the Sun before me, tho' not to comfort me, yet to show me the blessed state and heritage of those whom the Lord had blessed

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some suggested projects for students:

Do later first person narratives achieve the same degree of now-fulness as Grace Abounding? Use the method outlined in the lecture to produce a comparative figure for e.g. Defoe's Moll Flanders (1722) or Hogg's Confessions of a Justified Sinner (1824). (If 40,000 words seems too daunting a task, take a 10,000 word extract and multiply your results by 4.)

Is Bunyan initiating a new style of writing or continuing an old tradition? How empathetic is medieval narrative? Try placing The Book of Margery Kempe on the scale of now-fulness. Or compare Malory's narrative style with that of Sidney's Arcadia (1590)

What other devices, apart from the WAS-NOW paradox, signal that a narrative is aligned with its protagonist's point of view? Compare passages from Grace Abounding, Austen's Emma and James' The Ambassadors to see if there is evidence of a historical development in the expressive capacities or formal construction of the style.

