

## UNIT C.8 – WORKED ANALYSIS

### **Follow-up: a worked analysis of speech and thought presentation in the Hemingway passage in section C.8.**

Three principal narrative strands run through the passage. These strands, which often dovetail neatly with paragraph organisation, comprise speech presentation, thought presentation and Narrator's Representation of Action (see unit B.8, for explanation of the last of these). The NRA mode, is clearly marked by strings of narrative clauses which are temporally ordered (see unit A.9), contain verbs in the simple past and which express (predominantly) action processes (see unit A.6). Thus:

He knelt down and found the tuna under the stern with the gaff and drew it toward him . . . (1-2)

NRA realises both the opening and final paragraphs, and is also distributed evenly throughout the remainder of the passage at lines 11-14, 21-22, 27-8, 30 and 40-12.

Interwoven through this central narrative framework are clusters of speech and thought presentation. Speech, in which the old man is normally talking aloud to his cramped hand, is represented in the Direct mode, as in:

“What kind of a hand is that,” he said. “Cramp then if you want. Make yourself into a claw. It will do you no good.” (15-16)

although the Free Direct mode, where the reporting clause has been stripped away, occurs once, at line 29:

“How does it go hand? Or is it too early to know?”

The third strand, realised by thought presentation, verbalises the consciousness of the old man which for the most part centres on his self-reflexive exhortation to eat the

frugal meal. With only two exceptions, this is articulated through a variant of the Free Direct mode in which reporting clauses have been retained but inverted commas removed:

Come on, he thought . . . (17)  
There is no sense in being anything but practical though, he thought . . .  
(34-5)

In partial contrast to this FDT pattern stands a clearly marked example of Direct Thought at 31:

“It is strong full-blooded fish,” he thought. “I was lucky to get him . . .”

While DT is often thought of as a contrived and somewhat artless mode of thought presentation (and is for this reason relatively rare in prose fiction), the self-consciousness felt that the technique engenders is arguably well-suited in the present context to the old man’s deliberations.

The second exception to the FDT pattern is a possible case of Free Indirect Thought at 20-21:

It was not unpleasant.

The fact that this example could be assigned either to the NRA strand which frames it or to the active thought processes of the character stands as testimony to the elusiveness and “double-voiced” nature of this narrative device (see unit B.8). This sequence, with its euphemistic double negative suggesting idiolectal language, relates specifically to the old man’s meal, and on these grounds I shall treat it here as a backshifted (and therefore Free Indirect) variant of a possible FDT structure like:

It is not unpleasant, he thought.

It is a notable feature of this passage (and for that matter the bulk of the central section of the novella) that its narrative structure is developed through a sustained pattern of oscillation between the three strands identified above. With NRA as a locus, the narrative develops cyclically through transitions into speech, which is often, though not always, in the DS mode, and then through transitions into thought, which is often, though not always, in the FDT mode. This pattern is then rounded off by a return to NRA. In the passage, there are no less than sixteen such transitions in only forty-four sentences.