Week 7: Free Indirect Discourse

The literary style known as Free Indirect Discourse is interesting because here, everything shifts except a small subset of deictics, the inner circle of super-deictics. Pronouns and tenses basically.

Free Indirect Discourse, contrasted with thought reports, also help us identify a wider class of arguably deictic modes of expression.

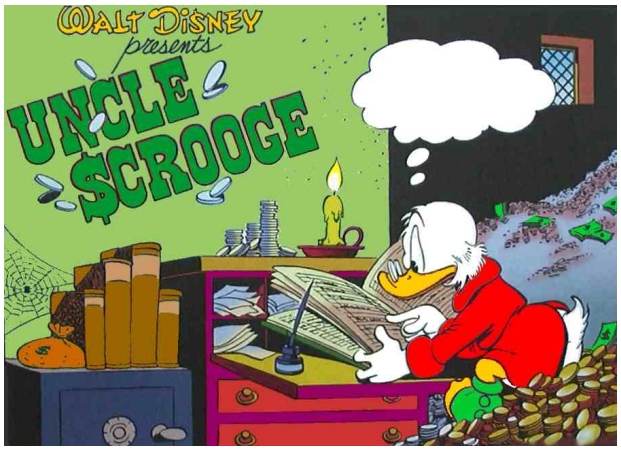
Schlenker, Philippe (2004) "Context of thought and context of utterance", *Mind and Language* **19**: 279–304

Maier, Emar (2012) "Quotation and Unquotation in Free Indirect Discourse", manuscript, University of Groningen.

We know that deictic words like *here*, *now*, *today*, *tomorrow* cannot be shifted.

Or we thought we knew. Normally they cannot. But …

(1) Scrooge sat poring over an old debt ledger. That good-for-nothing spendthrift had owed him that quarter for too long now. Today it was a year since this damn debt had been due. There was nothing for it, he would have to put the screws on the scoundrel.



Surely, "today" is not the day of narration.

And here "tonight" is not the night of narration:

(2) Strange, he thought. Dick and he always went out **together** – as
(2) Batman and Robin! Why was he going alone tonight?

And here "this" is hardly something to be found in the situation of narration:

And here "tomorrow" is not the day after the day of narration:

(3) She'd got to stop that rumor – fast!
(3) Sue might be able to help…
(3) She would drop in on her tomorrow.

(4) She let him kiss her. Yes, she thought. This was where she belonged. Later,
(3) kissing Morgan, she would remember: If that was where she belonged, what
(3) was she doing in someone else's arms?

Now who is the **imperative** directed at here:

(5) Gwen wondered why she felt ashamed of herself.
(4) After all, Peter had cold-shouldered all of them
(4) ever since he came to UChicago. And yet…
(4) Perhaps he had a *reason.* Perhaps they just
(4) didn't understand. But he couldn't care less.
(4) Look at him bending over those test-tubes!
(4) He didn't even know she existed!

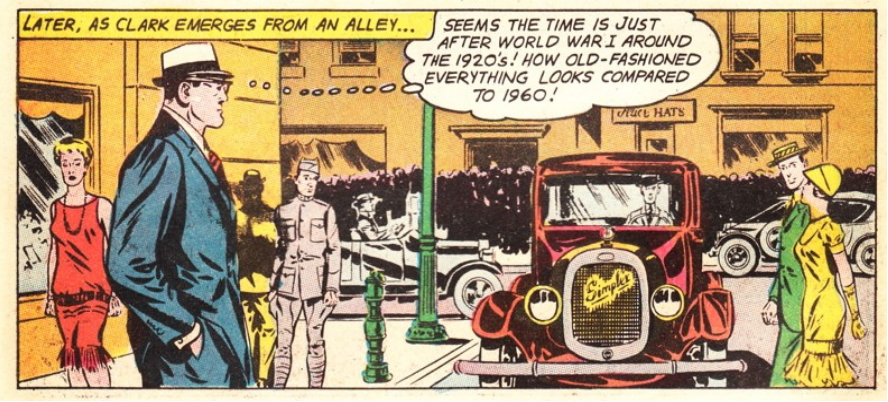
Note that imperatives can scarcely be embedded:

(6) ??She thought that look at him bending over those test-tubes.

And are there other modes of expression that cannot be embedded either, but are okay in Free Indirect Discourse (FID)? Yes there are:

- **Questions** (??"He thought that why was he going alone tonight")
- **Exclamatives** (??"He thought that how old-fashioned everything looked")

(7) Clark Kent strolled down Randolph Street noticing the vintage cars, flappers and
(7) doughboys. It seemed the time was just after World War I, around the 1920's.
(7) How old-fashioned everything looked compared to 1960!



'Perspective-taking effects': Elsi Kaiser 11/1/2013

Plus, there are a varied array of **expressive elements** that either cannot be embedded or, if they are, anchor to the speaker, like the reporter of the thought, the **narrator** – but in FID they anchor to the **protagonist** (cf. Gutzmann 2013 on 'use-conditional items'):

- *that* ***good-for-nothing*** *spendthrift*, *that* ***damn*** *debt*, *the* ***scoundrel***
- speaker-oriented particles, adverbs, interjections: ***donc***, ***enfin*** (cf. Madame Bovary below), ***Yes***
- fragments and pauses: ***And yet***, – ***fast***, **–**, ***…***

Elle se répétait: J'ai un amant! un amant! se délectant à cette idée comme à celle d'une autre puberté qui lui serait survenue. Elle allait donc enfin posséder ces plaisirs de l'amour, cette fièvre de bonheur dont elle avait désesperé. Elle entrait dans quelque chose de merveilleux, où tout serait passion, extase, délire…

She repeated, 'I have a lover! a lover!' delighting at the idea as if a second puberty had come to her. ***So at last she was to know those joys of love, that fever of happiness of which she had despaired!*** *She was entering upon a marvellous world where all would be passion, ecstasy, delirium…*

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- "So this was the reason she had been so hostile towards him"
- "She was shaken by a sudden gust of rage"
- "Yes, she would do it this very night"

and identify more use-conditional, main-clause phenomena.

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