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FREE INDIRECT DISCOURSE IN THE FEMALE WRITING

The article establishes specifics of the free indirect discourse by means of analyzing narrative techniques in the works by Jane Austen such as «Pride and Prejudice» and «Emma», and in the novel «To the Lighthouse» by Virginia Woolf. It studies the ways of conveying thoughts and words of the characters and the narrator's role in it.

Key words: *free indirect discourse, literature, novel, narrative style.*

The advantage of narrative fiction over other genres, according to Dorrit Cohn in *Transparent Minds*, is that it can utter the hidden thoughts, unspoken feelings, expose the private mind other than the speaker's. A narrative style which we are going to analyse in this article and which is used for the representation of spoken words or thoughts is called *free indirect discourse* (FID). The device allows «the reader to have the otherwise (i.e., in real life) unobtainable experience of another's talk to herself, within herself» [6, p. 125]. The significance of female writing cannot be underestimated and Henry James was quite explicit in pointing out the benefits of their legacy: «Women are delicate and patient observers; they hold their noses close, as it were, to the texture of life. They feel and perceive the real with a kind of personal tact, and their observations are recorded in a thousand delightful volumes» [10, p. 298]. The **purpose** of the article lies in establishing specifics of the free indirect discourse by means of analyzing narrative techniques in the works by Jane Austen, such as «Pride and Prejudice» and «Emma», and in the novel «To the Lighthouse» by Virginia Woolf.

To convey the thoughts, different points of view can be used. The followers of the communication theory understood that in the fiction we must have a narrator and an audience. Two points of view which were treated by them as a kind of «telling» were commonly distinguished – «first person narration» and «third person narration» [2, p. 69]. However, considering «third person narration» «in which the narrator appears only through the medium of his story and of the consciousness of his characters» [8, p. 6], the question was raised: «Who speaks?» According to Henry James and Percy Lubbock, the notion of point of view, or of third person point of view, is defined as an opposite of telling. «We can be told what a character does or thinks in a novel, or we can be 'shown' it. And to show or represent a character's thoughts, the natural mode is represented speech and thought. In this view, the narrator does not intervene at all to interpret the consciousness represented» [2, p. 69].

Free indirect speech was first analysed by Charles Bally in 1912. The attention of the public had already been drawn to the peculiar 'mixture' of indirect and direct speeches that was described as a device of rendering the opinions of the author by means of fictional characters [8, p. 8]. Charles Bally was the first to recognise it as a significant form and gave the name to this form «Le style indirect libre» (literally *free indirect style*). Bally defines three

possible ways to convey the character's words or thoughts. First two of them were already known to grammarians, but the third one marked the beginning of thorough analysis and controversial points of view:

1. Direct speech: *She said: «Where should I go now?»*
2. Indirect speech: *She asked where she should then go.*
3. Free indirect speech: *Where should she go now?*

The first two types can occur in our everyday speech, while the third one can occur in literature only. Charles Bally attributes such limitation of usage to the fact that an author can be alone with his characters just in the process of writing and «can immerse himself into the psyche of his imaginary creatures» [8, p. 14].

Gertraud Lerch explained free indirect speech by the withdrawal of the narrator. We see events through the experience of the characters while the author does not interfere as if he completely withdraws. However his views were criticized because if the narrator is not obtrusively present it does not mean he is not there with his own angle of vision and moral evaluation [8, p. 16]. For Roy Pascal the presence of the narrator in such passages is significant because the language and the composition are not completely 'subjectively determined', but interweave with the narrational mode and reveal the imagination and the irony of the narrator. «It is pre-eminently for these reasons that we hear in 'style indirect libre' a dual voice, which, through vocabulary, sentence structure, and intonation subtly fuses the two voices of the character and the narrator» [8, p. 26].

Free indirect discourse can be defined as «the technique for rendering a character's thought in his own idiom while maintaining the third-person reference and the basic tense of narration» [4, p. 100]. The passages cannot be read as ordinary narration. In *Transparent Minds* by Dorrit Cohn it is said that «narrative language appears in them as a kind of mask, from behind which sounds the voice of a figural mind» [4, p. 102]. One of the most characteristic features is the one that no indications are used to show us that someone is thinking. Neither the content nor the style can be attributed to their narrators. The language in such passages abounds with questions, exclamations, repetitions that are common to direct speech. Questions in FID «scarcely ever indicate a true question that awaits an answer, but is rhetorical, exclamatory» [8, p. 20]. Each of these features work together so that the reader could get within the skin of a character and see things from his perspective not sacrificing his own objective position [8, p. 6]. According to Lubbock, the relation between a narrator and a character is that of patronage, «the author's supplementation of the character through his own subordination – his condescension to restrict himself to the «position» of his «creature» – ... , like the inspiration of a Holy Spirit or a Muse» [5, p. 91].

In the period when Jane Austen wrote her works, the technique of free indirect speech was then fairly new. Only later it was dramatically extended in use by modernist writers such as Katherine Mansfield, Virginia Woolf, and James Joyce. Jane Austen uses the technique extensively and frequently, but, as some theorists claim, a bit differently from her contemporaries. She restricts the use of the technique «to represent the thoughts and feelings of the protagonist – rarely of another character – Austen places greater emphasis on the protagonist's subjectivity and gives it greater interest for the reader» [6, p. 133]. By examining the abstract from Jane Austen's novel «Pride and Prejudice» we will better understand **free indirect discourse** and will see what 'duality' Pascal writes about.

«In the gallery there were many family portraits, but they could have little to fix the attention of a stranger. Elizabeth walked on in quest of the only face whose features would be known to her. At last it arrested her—and she beheld a striking resemblance of Mr. Darcy, ... There was certainly at this moment, in Elizabeth's mind, a more gentle

sensation towards the original, than she had ever felt in the height of their acquaintance. The commendation bestowed on him by Mrs. Reynolds was of no trifling nature. What praise is more valuable than the praise of an intelligent servant? As a brother, a landlord, a master, she considered how many people's happiness were in his guardianship!—**How much of pleasure or pain it was in his power to bestow!**—How much of good or evil must be done by him» [1, p. 385].

The passage is about Elizabeth's contemplation of the portrait of Darcy and it marks the turning point of her reevaluation of his character. In the first two sentences the external narrator leads us into the gallery and describes its appearance. Jane Austen extensively uses dashes and in the third sentence it marks the specific intonation, makes us pause as the heroine pauses «*arrested*» and contemplate. We understand that no longer the narrator is speaking, but the character when Elizabeth's point of view becomes the main one. It was she who thought about Mrs. Reynolds' praise of Darcy, she wondered and exclaimed, «*How much of pleasure or pain it was in his power to bestow!*». Together with the past tense «*was*», which remains a feature of narrative report here, and signs of character's perspective, such as exclamations, we have **FID**. The subjectivity of the character is implied even in the short change of tense form from past to present «*What praise is more valuable...*». However, the narrator is still present and we can feel this in such a phrase as «*she considered*», which returns us to the reality of the report made by someone else, and diverts us from the character's mind, from FID. So, we can see certain ambiguity when the perspective shifts from the narrator to the character.

Kathy Mezei, analysing «Emma» by Jane Austen, wrote that «through FID Austen allows her heroine to achieve a certain independence from the status quo and from authority in the form of the narrator. Mezei notes the ironic parallels between the narrator's and Emma's plotting and matchmaking, but she locates the site of Emma's struggle for (narratorial) control within instances of FID where Emma's discourse vies with that of the narrator» [3, p. 12–13]. We can analyse a short abstract from «Emma»: «*Emma divined what everybody present must be thinking. She was his object, and everybody must perceive it*» [1, p. 906].

In the first sentence the presence of the narrator is strongly felt and we can even perceive irony in the word «*divined*», because it goes hand in hand with the next sentence that is apparently Emma's point of view. Geoffrey Leech and Michael Short explained the connection between free indirect speech and irony: «The irony arises because FID is normally viewed as a form where the authorial voice is interposed between the reader and what the character says, so that the reader is distanced from the character's words» [3, p. 37].

The similar struggle between the character and the narrator is present within free indirect discourse in the works by Virginia Woolf. The technique allows the author to describe the human relationships and show us the shifts of human consciousness that occur in seconds. We can examine through the character's inner monologue an ordinary mind on a common day. Woolf captures occasional, scattered thoughts and feelings. The reader even begins to doubt who is thinking at the moment when there is more than one character in a scene. As Christopher Watkin noted in his article about the narrative point of view in «To the Lighthouse» by Virginia Woolf that «certain sentences just hang in the air between the characters, belonging fully and finally to no-one exclusively and as if they exist independently of individual thinkers» [7]. We can see this phenomenon in the following passage from the novel: «*The extraordinary irrationality of her remark, the folly of women's minds enraged him. He had ridden through the valley of death, been shattered and shivered; and now, she flew in the face of facts, made his children hope what was utterly out of the question, in effect, told lies. He stamped his foot on the stone step. «Damn you,» he said. But what had she said? Simply that it might be fine tomorrow. So it might*» [11, p. 44–45].

We cannot tell for certain whose thoughts were the last three sentences. It seems that thought separates itself from the characters leaving us to gather the pieces into one complete picture by deciding whom these thoughts belong to. We can assume that they were reflections of Mr. Ramsay's wife – Mrs. Ramsay – on account of her husband's words «*Damn you*». She wonders whether she said something foolish and asks herself questions «*But what had she said? Simply that it might be fine tomorrow. So it might*», though not directly but with the use of past tense. Therefore, we may state that it is one more example of free indirect discourse.

We can observe some differences in the use of the style of the writers. Jane Austen employs free indirect discourse by making it a tribute to a specific character and by limiting it to the certain circumstances and setting. Thus, reading her novels creates the effect of «dual voice» in our minds and the process seems to be lighter due to the rigid structure. While reading novels by Virginia Woolf we can notice the constant shifts from one mind to another which make it sometimes difficult to follow, but her style is marked by an unusual candour. The most private and deep thoughts are shown with the same air of importance as trifle ones because they belong to human beings and therefore are worth our attention.

To conclude, we can say that **free indirect discourse** is described the best as the novelist's representation of the inner life of the invented characters, when the reader thinks in the third person but understands the words from the point of view of the character. It is employed by a number of writers, but women are considered to be sensitive which, in some ways, gives them the opportunities to reveal the delicate intricacies of human character and relationships. Owing to the writing activity of two prominent women, Jane Austen and Virginia Woolf, we now have the advantage of admiring the artistic use of the technique «free indirect discourse» in the masterpieces of English Literature.

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