

## **Methodologies for Stylistic Analysis: practices and pedagogies**

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This chapter explores a selected range of methodologies used in stylistic analysis with a particular focus on applications to stylistics in the classroom. Methodology is very important in any form of text analysis and analysts themselves also have a responsibility to say what they are doing and how they are doing it. This makes the analysis transparent to others and enables readers to retrieve how analysts have reached their interpretive decisions. Necessarily, too, the introduction discusses stylistics itself as a methodology. The chapter begins with some theoretical background to issues of curriculum design and development and then illustrates the different pedagogic possibilities that different methodologies for stylistic analysis entail.

### **Literature, language and education: some background**

The last twenty years have seen significant advances in linguistics, education and literary and cultural theory, a development that has provided a strong basis for exploring texts using a diverse range of methodologies (see Hall, 2005 for a comprehensive survey). Literary theory has embraced many topics, including the nature of an author's intentions, the character and measurement of the responses of a reader and the specific textuality of a literary text. In particular, there has also been a continuing theorisation of the selection of literary texts for study which has had considerable resonance for the teaching of literature and for its interfaces with the language classroom. On the one hand, there is a view, widespread still internationally, that the study of literature is the study of a select number of great writers judged according to the enduringly serious nature of their examination of the human condition. On the other hand, there is the view that the notion of literature is relative and that ascriptions of value to texts are a transient process dependent on the given values of a given time.

How tastes change and evaluations shift as part of a process of canon formation are therefore inextricably bound up with definitions of what literature is and what it is for. In this respect, definitions of literature, and of literary language are either *ontological* - establishing an essential, timeless property of what literature or literary language *is* - or *functional* - establishing the specific and variable circumstances within which texts are designated as literary, and the ends to which these texts are and can be used. Recent work on creativity and language play has reinforced this awareness of both continuities and discontinuities in degrees of literariness across discourse types (Crystal, 1998; Cook, 1994, 2000; Carter, 2004; Pope, 2005). One outcome has been the introduction into language curricula, for both first and for second or foreign language learners, of a much greater variety of texts and text-types so that literary texts are studied alongside advertisements, newspaper reports, magazines, popular song lyrics, blogs, internet discourse and the many multi-modal texts to which we have become accustomed.

In parallel with these developments methodologies for analysis of texts have evolved. In a wide-ranging survey of trends over the past century of literature in foreign language education Kramsch and Kramsch (2000) underline how, in the early part of the twentieth century, learning a foreign language meant a close study of the canonical literature in that language. (Indeed, in some parts of the world the language course book still consists of canonical literary extracts). In the period from the 1940s to the 1960s literature was seen as extraneous to everyday communicative needs and as something of an elitist pursuit. However, in the 1970s and 1980s the growth of communicative language teaching methods led to a

reconsideration of the place of literature in the language classroom with recognition of the primary authenticity of literary texts and of the fact that more imaginative and representational uses of language could be embedded alongside more referentially utilitarian output. Kramsch and Kramsch (2000:567) term this the 'proficiency movement' and underline how it saw in literature 'an opportunity to develop vocabulary acquisition, the development of reading strategies, and the training of critical thinking, that is, reasoning skills'. They point out how awareness dawned that literature, since it had continuities with other discourses, could be addressed by the same pedagogic procedures as those adopted for the treatment of all texts to develop relevant skills sets, especially reading skills, leading in particular to explorations of what it might mean to read a text closely. (See Alderson, 2000, Kern, 2000 for further valuable surveys).

### **Stylistics as methodology**

As a methodology, the pedagogic value of stylistics in the teaching of literary language and of how such language works within a text, in both native speaker and non-native speaker contexts, has resided in an explication of how texts are understood and interpreted by readers, mainly in terms of their interaction with the linguistic organisation of the text. Stylistics has therefore served to make explicit and retrievable how interpretation is formed or new aspects of interpretation revealed. (see Short 1995: 53).

The adoption of stylistic approaches is not without its problems, however. Many literature specialists feel that stylistics is too mechanistic and too reductive, saying nothing significant about historical context or aesthetic theory, eschewing evaluation for the most part in the interests of a naïve 'objectivity' and claiming too much for interpretations that are at best merely text-immanent (see Fowler, 1986 and Verdonk, 2002 for further discussion). And some language teachers and language researchers feel that it is only appropriate at the most advanced of levels (Gower, 1986) and lacks proper empirical research support for its claims (Edmondson, 1997)<sup>1</sup>.

A more considered view is that stylistics has contributed in diverse ways to methodology in the teaching of literature and that by turns developments in pedagogy in both L1 and L2 contexts have become embedded in stylistics. Among the most striking developments have been those that focus on 'textual transformations' using comparative text analysis by means of processes of re-writing from different angles and positions that 'translate' the text from one medium to another along an axis of spoken to written, verbal to visual, textual to dramatic (see Pope 1995, Widdowson 1992, Carter and Long 1987, 1991, Durant and Fabb 1990). Once again the emerging value of such work is its concern with guiding learners through *processes* of reading and engaging with what such a process reveals for understanding the meanings of texts, not in order to disclose any one single universal meaning but for what it may reveal to the reader in different social and cultural contexts in and out of the classroom.

### **Critical Discourse Analysis**

A further aspect of textual analysis with which some stylisticians concern themselves, and about which others have reservations, is the study of the extent to which interpretation is influenced by tensions between the text and its reception in the wider context of social relations and socio-political structures (see Mills 1995, Fairclough, 1989). In some contexts stylistic analysis has become embedded within a framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). In this way, explorations of ideology and social power feature as part of a stylistic analysis with attention paid both to the formal features of the text and to its reception within a reading community. This development has been the subject of some controversy, not least

because *all* texts chosen for analysis may generate ideological considerations and interpretations according to the disposition of the individual analyst (see Widdowson 1995, 2004, Fairclough 1989, 1992, Toolan 1997 for further discussion). Nevertheless, despite such criticisms, CDA has been the first attempt so far to formalise a methodology that seeks to articulate the relationship between a text and the context in which it is produced, received and interpreted, thus moving beyond a concern with wholly text immanent interpretation and considering wider social and cultural issues.

Thus what has emerged in both theory and classroom practice is the view that, although there are not an infinite number of possible interpretations and although it would be wrong to suggest that anything goes, there is no single 'correct' way of analysing and interpreting the text, nor any single correct approach. In this sense the appropriate method is very much a hands-on approach taking each text on its own merits, using what the reader knows, what the reader is aiming for in his or her learning context, and employing all of the available tools, both in terms of language knowledge and methodological approaches. It is a process-based methodology which encourages learners to be active participants in and explorers of linguistic and cultural processes both with an awareness of and an interest in the process itself, including the development of a metalanguage for articulating responses to it. Beginnings have emerged in work in stylistics reported above and in a range of texts for both students and teachers during the past twenty years or so (see Collie and Slater, 1987; Maley, 1999; Maley and Moulding 1985; McRae and Vethamani, 1999; Paran, 2006).

### **Methodologies: practical stylistics**

Having considered some background to stylistics we now embrace more closely the range of methodologies available to and utilised by practitioners of stylistics. *Practical stylistics* involves close reading of the verbal texture of texts. Deriving as it does from practical criticism and from the practice of making uses of language a 'way in' to the meaning of texts, practical stylistics is the basic practice of stylistics (Widdowson, 1975,1992). The basic assumption is that literature is made from and with language, that language is the medium of literature and that beginning with the very textuality of the text is a secure foundation for its interpretation. The following extract from Dickens' *Bleak House* (the opening paragraphs to the novel, 1852-3)) illustrates some of these basic analytical and interpretive assumptions and practices:

London. Michaelmas Term lately over, and the Lord Chancellor sitting in Lincoln's Inn Hall. Implacable November weather. As much mud in the streets, as if the waters had but newly retired from the face of the earth, and it would not be wonderful to meet a Megalosaurus, forty feet long or so, waddling like an elephantine lizard up Holborn Hill. Smoke lowering down from chimneypots, making a soft black drizzle with flakes of soot in it as big as full-grown snowflakes – gone into mourning, one might imagine, for the death of the sun. Dogs, undistinguishable in the mire. Horses, scarcely better; splashed to their very blinkers. Foot passengers, jostling one another's umbrellas, in a general infection of ill-temper, and losing their foothold at street-corners, where tens of thousands of other foot passengers have been slipping and sliding since the day broke (if this day ever broke) adding new deposits to the crust upon crust of mud, sticking at those points tenaciously to the pavement and accumulating at compound interest.

Fog everywhere. Fog up the river, where it flows among green aits and meadows; fog down the river, where it rolls defiled among the tiers of shipping, and the waterside pollution of a great (and dirty) city. Fog on the Essex Marshes, fog on the Kentish heights. Fog creeping into the cabooses of collier-brigs; fog lying out on the yards, and hovering in the rigging of

great ships; fog drooping on the gunwales of barges and small boats. Fog in the eyes and throats of ancient Greenwich pensioners, wheezing by the firesides of their wards; fog in the stem and bowl of the afternoon pipe of the wrathful skipper, down in his close cabin; fog cruelly pinching the toes and fingers of his shivering little 'prentice boy on deck. Chance of people on the bridges peeping over the parapets into a nether sky of fog, with fog all round them, as if they were up in a balloon, and hanging in the misty clouds.

Gas looming through the fog in divers places in the street, much as the sun may, from the spongy fields, be seen to loom by husbandman and ploughboy. Most of the shops lighted two hours before their time – as the gas seems to know, for it has a haggard and unwilling look.

The raw afternoon is rawest, and the dense fog is densest, and the muddy streets are muddiest, near that leaden-headed old obstruction, appropriate ornament for the threshold of leaden-headed old corporation: Temple Bar. And hard by Temple Bar, in Lincoln's Inn Hall, at the very heart of the fog, sits the Lord High Chancellor in his High Court of Chancery.

Very basic and preliminary interpretation of this text would need to take due account of the following stylistic features:

The role of verbs: in the opening paragraph alone there are verbs such as 'retired', 'waddling', 'splashed', 'jostling', 'slipping', 'sliding', and so on. The verbs all serve to create an atmosphere of constant action and movement in the big city. Yet there are no finite verbs in main clauses in the text. There is thus a difference between the following two sentences, the first of which (1) contains a main finite verb, the second of which (2) does not:

- (1) Foot passengers jostled one another's umbrellas and lost their foothold at street corners.
- (2) Foot passengers jostling one another's umbrellas and losing their foothold at street corners.

Main finite verbs provide, as it were, a kind of anchor for the action. It is clear when something took place and that the action was completed. In the sentence (2) above from *Bleak House* the reader is left suspended, knowing that the action is ongoing, but awaiting a main verb to give you your bearings. A sentence such as the following provides that kind of 'anchor' for the action in the verb *arrived*, which is the finite verb in the sentence:

Foot passengers jostling one another's umbrellas and losing their foothold at street corners *arrived* at the bank.

The finite verb is thus a verb which tells us when something happened (past or present), how many were/are involved (singular or plural) and who the participants are ('you'/'we'/'I', etc.). Sentence (2) above is a kind of model for many of the sentences in the first three paragraphs. Sentences such as the following therefore serve to create a sense of both disorientation and dislocation. The reader feels that all the activity of London is confused and directionless; and no-one knows what timescale they are in. Furthermore, the present participles in particular ('lowering', 'jostling', 'wheezing', 'looming') convey a feeling of continuous action which could almost be timeless.

London.  
Implacable November weather.

Smoke lowering down from the chimney pots.  
Dogs undistinguishable in the mire.  
Foot passengers jostling one another's umbrellas.  
Fog in the eyes and throats of ancient Greenwich pensioners wheezing by the firesides  
Gas looming through the fog in divers places.

Given the timeless character which is imparted to these descriptions it is perhaps not surprising that Dickens can suggest that London has an almost prehistoric feel to it—'and it would not be wonderful to meet a Megalosaurus, forty feet long or so, waddling like an elephantine lizard up Holborn Hill'.

This kind of preliminary practical stylistic analysis is the cornerstone of close reading. It seeks iconic equations between observed linguistic choices and patterns and the enactment of meaning. It links linguistic form and literary meaning. The forms that are identified as significant are largely based on intuition and observation and may vary from one analyst to another but no stylistic account of the text can omit some treatment and interpretation of such features. Practical stylistics operates in a systematic manner (sometimes drawing on checklists; see Short 1996) but in an otherwise relatively informal way with no specific technological support: just the reader, a knowledge of how the language works and a willingness to seek explanation of the effects produced by the language. The difference between practical stylistics and the looser, more discursive accounts found in practical criticism is one of degree, along a continuum with the stylistic account seeking above all else to be made retrievable and recoverable by other readers. It accords in other words with a basic principle of stylistic analysis that others need to be able to see how you have reached the interpretive account that is offered. It is this process which makes an account of the text retrievable and recoverable and allows others to agree or disagree and for different interpretations to be compared transparently and objectively in the sense defined by Wales (2001: 373) who qualifies the extremes of this debate by saying that 'Stylistics is only "objective" (and the scare quotes are significant) in the sense of being methodical, systematic, empirical, analytical, coherent, accessible, retrievable and consensual.'

It is, however, the analyst's analysis and does not derive from others. It is a basic form of stylistic analysis. It is steam stylistics; stylistics by candle-light, stylistics before the age of electricity. It is an improvement on horse power but exists in a world relatively untroubled by subsequent developments in literary theory, before the advent of computer power and corpus stylistics or the subtleties of cognitive poetics. It is a naive practice. It requires, in pedagogic terms, quite a bit of practice to gain confidence in. It is not easy, especially for native speakers of a language to convert knowledge *of* the language into knowledge *about* the language. It is, however, a practice without the mastery of which no subsequent stylistic analysis can easily take place.

### **Transformative text analysis**

It will be seen that the 'reading' of the opening to *Bleak House* took place largely by means of a process of reading and re-reading that involved consideration of how particular linguistic features operated in the text compared with more normal uses and functions. In terms of pedagogy what are the methodologies that best develop those kinds of skills of observation, comparison and analysis?

Transformative text analysis is built on similar assumptions to those of close reading but it is augmented by a methodology of *active reading* (Knights and Thurgar-Dawson 2007).

Transformative analysis is built on a pedagogic assumption that close reading has tendencies toward a more passive reception of the text and that putting the reader into a more active role by forcing the text into a different linguistic or generic design will lead to more active engagement with its specific textuality.

Transformative text analysis assumes that noticing is more likely to take place if features of language and textual organisation are drawn to a reader's attention as a result of the text having been deliberately manipulated in some way. The process here is one in which the reader compares the original text with one which has been re-written, transformed, re-registered. *Re-writing* involves making use of a different range of linguistic choices; *transformation* is the manipulation of some key design feature of the text such as its narrative organisation; and *re-registration* involves a more distinctive shift so that the same content is conveyed in a different genre. Thus: re-writing the Dickens passage might involve some extension of a process that has already been undertaken, that of comparing the effects of the presence or absence of particular verbal structures. Textual transformation involves relatively more radical interventions such as a change in the point of view from which the text is narrated. For example, the opening paragraph to *Bleak House* would be transformed to narration in the first or third person. And yet more radical textual surgery would see a re-registration of the text from a novel to a travelogue or a tourist guide to the city of London with readers invited to comment on how the different genres invite and prompt different kinds of reading practice and interpretation alongside consideration of the nature of literary and non-literary language functions. (see also Pope 1994)

The notion of re-registration means that no single word or stylistic feature will be barred from admission to a literary context. This is not to say that certain stylistic or lexical features are not regarded as more conventionally 'literary' than others. However, re-registration recognises that the full, unrestricted resources of a language are open to exploitation for literary ends. As studies of novelistic discourse by Bakhtin (1984) suggest, not simply single words, but the characteristics of other discursive genres, may be represented in a literary context. According to Bakhtin, the effects of re-registration, of appropriating the characteristics of another discourse as an object for representation, are often deliberately parodic and travestying, highlighting through a process of imitation the core qualities of the object being investigated.

To illustrate: in the final paragraph of this opening to *Bleak House* main finite verbs are here restored to the sentences of the text. In particular the main verb 'to be' is repeated: 'The raw afternoon is rawest, and the dense fog is densest, and the muddy streets are muddiest...' The presence of a main verb is most noticeable in the final sentence:

And hard by Temple Bar, in Lincoln's Inn Hall, at the very heart of the fog, sits the Lord High Chancellor in his High Court of Chancery.

Here the main finite verb is *sits*. The action and location of the Lord High Chancellor is thus clearly situated. Indeed, the sentence is structured so that the location of the main subject of the sentence ('the Lord High Chancellor') comes first in the sentence. He sits:

hard by Temple Bar in Lincoln's Inn Hall at the very heart of the fog.

Structured differently, the sentence might have read:

The Lord High Chancellor sits hard by Temple Bar in Lincoln's Inn Hall at the very heart of the fog.

This structure would be more normal and would follow the conventional word order for sentences in English in which the subject ('The Lord High Chancellor') occurs first and is then followed by a main finite verb ('sits'). But one of Dickens's purposes may be to delay the subject so that it has more impact as a result of its occurrence in an unusual position. It also has a very particular impact as a result of being in the simple present tense ('sits') when readers of a novel or of any kind of narrative might expect verbs to be in the simple past tense ('sat'). 'Sits' suggests, however, that the Lord High Chancellor always sits there and is a permanent landmark in this landscape. The simple present tense in English carries this sense of a permanent, general, unchanging truth.

In this final paragraph one of the main effects which Dickens creates may be to imply that the legal system of the country is in a state of permanent confusion or even creates states of confusion which cannot be changed. And both in these opening paragraphs and in the novel as a whole *fog* assumes symbolic importance, reinforcing a sense both of general confusion and of not being able to see clearly. The Lord High Chancellor is always 'at the very heart of the fog' and nothing will alter this position. For this reason perhaps choices of language and of the structure of the sentence position 'the Lord High Chancellor' and 'the heart of the fog' together.

### **Reader responses and the role of the reader**

The various forms of textual manipulation described here are designed to impact on the nature of the reading process undertaken by the reader, with the pedagogic aim of fostering more active and engaged reading on the part of individual readers. But it is in the nature of stylistic analysis to ask to what degree responses to texts are shared and to explore the extent to which variant readings might be accounted for. In part, this kind of inquiry is stimulated by an underlying belief that interpretations should not vary markedly if texts are analysed with due care and appropriate linguistic rigour and there have been numerous attempts in recent times by practitioners of stylistics to go beyond the individual reader and to try to account for multiple reader responses (see Kintgen 1983, Van Peer 1986, Hanauer 1999 etc). The underlying impulse is to provide real empirical evidence and a quantitatively-rooted support for investigative processes which, it is felt, may otherwise be deemed unduly impressionistic.

Such stylistic methodologies are less targeted at approaches to teaching and learning but there are interesting possibilities nonetheless for group reading and group interpretations of texts. Alderson and Short (1989), for example, develop the interesting practice of revealing a text line by line in a gradual unfolding of meaning and invite readers to undertake a step-by-step interpretation and re-interpretation of features of the language of a text as it emerges. The responses of readers may be collected in the form of protocols (written during and after the analytical process) or recorded orally as readers talk out their responses in varying degrees of immediacy of engagement. In the case of the *Bleak House* passage reader response approaches would *inter alia* be interested in measuring the kinds of attention a reader gives to the text as he or she reads it, at what points exactly such attention is drawn more or less powerfully by particular foregrounded features and what the effects are that such foregrounding has on the reader. For example, just *how* do readers respond to all those repetitions of the word 'fog'? Are they surprised, unsettled, overwhelmed? What are the precise points at which such feelings set in? Can effects of disorientation be precisely located

in the process of reading? How cumulative are they? How exactly do readers feel when reading sentences without main verbs? What other effects are produced and how can they be described? Such data is commonly elicited by questionnaire, by verbal protocols collected as the reader talks aloud their responses into a recorder as they read or in a process of post-hoc group discussion. Each of these strategies for collecting the data are different and need to be disentangled but the aim is to get closer to the linguistic particulars, the actual 'texture' (Stockwell, 2009) of the reading experience and to build theories that are based both on theoretical speculation as well as on empirical evidence of what readers (from various backgrounds and reading positions of course) actually *do*.

### **From steam to broadband: corpus stylistics**

Corpus stylistics makes use of computer driven searches of the language of large multi-million word databases to help identify particular stylistic features. The use of corpus linguistic techniques and strategies is a necessary methodological advance in stylistics as it allows the power of computational analysis to identify significant linguistic patterns that would not be identifiable by human intuition, at least not over the extent of a novel the size of *Bleak House*. Significant here are: the size of language corpora these days and the ease with which written text (including textual examples from different historical periods) can be collected and stored; the speed with which data can be retrieved; the advances in ease of analytical software use such as Wordsmith Tools (Scott 2004); the range of search tools available including sophisticated programmes that allow searches not just on individual words but on word patterns and clusters and particular syntactic and discursal forms. Most relevantly, too, software advances also now generate comparison between different corpora, allowing a novel by a contemporary writer to be stylistically compared and benchmarked with a multi-million word standard language corpus, and providing whole new vistas on issues of norms and deviations, foregrounding and parallelism of the kind that in previous generations, however rigorous the analysis, would rely more on individual responses and judgements and were built, inevitably, on shorter texts and extracts.

In a basic sense corpus linguistic description of language prioritises lexis. Whereas stylistics pays more attention to deviations from linguistic norms that lead to the creation of artistic effects, corpus linguistics focuses on what can be identified computationally --- which tends to be on lexical patterns, especially patterns that are frequently repeated. Corpus linguistics identifies words that habitually co-occur, with a particular emphasis on the significance of collocation recently extended in Sinclair's (2004) concept of the lexical item with the categories of 'collocation', 'colligation', 'semantic preference' and 'semantic prosody' to describe patterns of lexical partnership around a fixed core. Innovative descriptive categories that have been developed in the field of corpus linguistics can also be used in literary stylistics. Whereas general corpus studies may want to disregard idiosyncrasies of individual texts, corpus stylistic studies can pay closer attention to the individual qualities of a specific text, as Stubbs (2005) and Starcke (2006) illustrate by concentrating on lexical clusters in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and in Austen's *Persuasion* respectively.

In terms of our focus in this chapter on the opening to *Bleak House*, a corpus stylistic methodology would search the whole novel for what is revealed to be of significance in its lexical population: for example, the word *fog* is frequent and a computer search on what in the field of corpus linguistics is called a 'keyword' would reveal the extent to which *fog* remains salient across the whole novel, the nature of its other collocates, the words that surround it in lexical partnerships across the whole novel and their repetition in different parts of the novel and the parts of the novel where they congregate with a particular lexical density.

Mahlberg (2007a and b) notes the significance of lexical clusters in Dickens and explores by means of corpus stylistic analysis the significance of particularly frequent and prominent lexical clusters in a corpus of novels of Dickens, comparing the novels with a general language corpus of nineteenth century texts and with one another. One cluster she notes to be of significance is the structure *as if* and *as if it were*, a cluster or bundle of words that, alongside modal expressions such as *would not be* structures a hypothetical extension of meanings, the introduction through the indeterminacy of the fog of a textual world, so that the reader is not altogether sure where the real world stops and another world of *irrealis*, a more fantastical and improbable world, begins.

As much mud in the streets, **as if** the waters had but newly retired from the face of the earth, and it would not be wonderful to meet a Megalosaurus, forty feet long or so, waddling like an elephantine lizard up Holborn Hill.

Chance of people on the bridges peeping over the parapets into a nether sky of fog, with fog all round them, **as if** they were up in a balloon, and hanging in the misty clouds.

Here is a chart as illustrated by Mahlberg which shows in this case the regularity of extensions to this structure (with a personal pronoun) in several of Dickens' novels relative to other common nineteenth century texts.

<i>Number of types: 5</i>	<i>Dickens</i>	<i>19C texts</i>
as if he would have	41	2
as if he were a	45	7
as if he were going	32	3
as if it were a	72	23
if he were going to	26	3

Of course, corpus stylistic analysis is an essentially quantitative procedure and involves an assessment of significance drawn statistically from a corpus-informed count. The actual application of corpus stylistics to texts necessarily involves, as we have seen, qualitative decisions and interpretive acts made by the analyst in the light of and to some degree in advance of the results from the assembled data-bank. Corpus stylistic analysis is a relatively objective methodological procedure that at its best is guided by a relatively subjective process of interpretation. Its full potential for literary stylistics is yet to be exploited and, as Semino and Short (2004) and Wynne (2006) point out, both philosophical and practical barriers need to be overcome, but it has emerged as a major methodological feature of any future stylistics landscape.

### **Methodological futures: linking the cognitive and the social**

Recent developments in cognitive poetics, particularly text world theory (Hidalgo-Downing 2000, Stockwell 2002, Gavins, 2007) have underlined another key methodology for capturing the integration of more or less subjective and objective accounts of texts. Here the stylistic focus is often on the deictic properties of a text that highlight these relationships between subjectivities, on the basis of locating person, time and place, and also in terms of social and textual positioning. As Stockwell (forthcoming) puts it:

A world, in this model, is a deictically-defined space with participants. At the top, discourse world level, readers and authors create a text world on the basis of the literary text. This text world is built in the reader's mind as a rich world representation that is used as the medium of the literary experience..... Within the text world, further

departures from the deictic location can be made, creating one or several embedded world-switches. These switches are triggered by modalisations, negatives, metaphors, flashbacks, flashforwards, speculative or hypothetical states, direct speech and other narrative switches, or reorientations in spatial location.... All of these shifts are enacted stylistically.

The deictic texture of the opening to *Bleak House* reinforces the potential of this more cognitive dimension to ally with the more social interpretation framed by the 'position' of Lord High Chancellors, obtuse and socially disadvantaging legal systems and a world that is as primitive as it has always been. In the four opening paragraphs to the novel innumerable deictic expressions evidencing 'world-switches' can be seen across the passage, in fact so many that the images of confusion and chaos are compounded in the lack of any clear deictic centre, that is, a clear vantage point from which the location of the different locational references and prepositional phrases of place (up Holborn Hill, at street-corners) can be seen. Specific places and topographical features in and around London are mentioned (the Essex Marshes, the Kentish heights, Lincoln's Inn Hall, Temple Bar, Holborn Hill) but the world which is invoked is unstable, with constant shifts in spatial location. Modalisations, negatives and hypothetical conditionals (it would not be wonderful, if this day ever broke, one might imagine, may be seen to loom) compound the disorientation.

Up and down the Thames text worlds, fictional worlds and real worlds, literal and metaphorical, socially and cognitively embedded, blur and slip and slide and accumulate only more accretions of confusion, accompanied as they are by 'flashbacks and flashforwards, speculative and hypothetical states'. And key financial and banking metaphors also emerge through the fog to create a mental mapping that underlines that in *Bleak House* London is a capital of capital, a text world where the dirt of money and wealth and privilege sits static and permanent: adding new **deposits** to the crust upon crust of mud, sticking at those points tenaciously to the pavement and **accumulating at compound interest**.

A cognitively-oriented linguistics and poetics add extra dimensions to stylistic analysis. We could go on, anchoring more interpretive suggestions to deictic reference, metaphoric constellation and lexico-syntactic pattern. We could explore the extent to which the patterns identified here underscore key themes in the novel where legal obfuscation and inequities of power are explored. We could look for further stylistic features using other tools and methodologies. There is no necessary stopping point to stylistic analysis; only a sense that sometimes less may be more and that this chapter aims to do no more than introduce the outlines of key approaches and methods which, as I hope we have seen, have the power to deliver in the classroom, empowering readers with an equipment that, above all else, allows them to take it further for themselves.

## **Conclusion**

The methodologies employed to advance the study of style are united by a determination to better account for the processes of meaning construction which are the basis for our understanding and interpretation of texts. In pedagogic terms the aim is to provide a systematic set of analytical tools, drawn from linguistics, that can foster insights into the patterning of literary texts in ways which allow those insights to be open, evidenced and retrievable. It is, as Toolan (1985) points out, the work of bricoleurs, not engineers. Considerable progress has been made over the course of the last century and the start of this century promises many more advances in a field that has become ever more confident and assured of its relevance to literary and language studies and to its multiple classroom applications.

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<sup>1</sup> More recently, however, in the 1980s and 1990s the place of stylistics has become more assured as traditional linguists began to feel threatened by developments in discourse and pragmatics that (augmented by the dialogic philosophies of Bakhtin and Vygotsky) generated fuller accounts of language in use and in context and as traditional literary critics began to feel threatened by the linguistic turn in the humanities and social sciences. In parallel with these developments there has also been, often in response to a growth in ESOL and to demands to make courses accessible and 'relevant' to high-fee paying international students as well as significant developments in classroom research in second and foreign language studies, a not unsurprising growth in pedagogic stylistics (Hall 2005, Watson and Zyngier 2006). This pedagogic turn has also given buoyancy to the language dimension of English studies, accelerating under the impetus of (mainly) sociolinguistic studies in world Englishes and debates concerning the ownership of English. The growth of stylistic studies of literatures in English, often within a classroom research perspective, is especially marked (Talib 1992, 2002). These same two decades also saw a growth in volumes dedicated to these broad pedagogic perspectives (Brumfit and Carter 1986, Short 1989, Widdowson 1975, 1992, Carter and McRae 1996, Kramsch 1993, Watson and Zyngier 2006) and a simultaneous growth in classroom-ready textbooks in stylistics (Leech and Short 1981, Short 1996, Simpson 1997, 2004, Wales 1990), the latter of which have often exerted real influence in schools, where a new generation of teachers of English have embraced the possibilities occasioned by the growth a major A'level (UK school finishing exams) in English Language and integrated Language and Literature.