

Written Fluency – Autumn semester 2004

**Handout 9** - 14 December 2004

**Prose and Poetry. Stylised Dialogue.**

Task 1: *What are the two (or even four) main ways of reporting speech in literary genres? Give simple examples.*

Task 2: *Look at the following extracts and try to find substitutes for **said** following or preceding direct speech. Why are they used?*

It made no difference to me. Dishonesty in a woman is a thing you never blame deeply – I was casually sorry, and then I forgot. It was on that same house party that we had a curious conversation about driving a car. It started because she passed so close to some workmen that our fender flicked a button on one man's coat.

'You're a rotten driver,' I protested. 'Either you ought to be more careful, or you oughtn't to drive at all.'

'I am careful.'

'No, you're not.'

'Well, other people are,' she said lightly.

'What's that got to do with it?'

'They'll keep out of my way,' she insisted. 'It takes two to make an accident.'

'Suppose you met somebody just as careless as yourself.'

'I hope I never will,' she answered. 'I hate careless people. That's why I like you.'

Her grey, sun-strained eyes stared straight ahead, but she had deliberately shifted our relations, and for a moment I thought I loved her. But I am slow-thinking and full of interior rules that act as brakes on my desires, and I knew that first I had to get myself definitely out of that tangle back home.

(Francis Scott Fitzgerald: *The Great Gatsby*)

"How old is that horse, my friend?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, rubbing his nose with the shilling he had reserved for the fare.

"Forty-two," replied the driver, eyeing him askant.

"What!" ejaculated Mr. Pickwick, laying his hand upon his note-book. The driver reiterated his former statement. Mr. Pickwick looked very hard at the man's face, but his features were immovable, so he noted down the fact forthwith.

"And how do you keep him out at a time?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, searching for further information.

"Two or three weeks," replied the man.

"Weeks!" said Mr. Pickwick in astonishment—and out came the note-book again.

"He lives at Pentonwil when he's at home," observed the driver, coolly, "but we seldom takes him home, on account of his weakness."

"On account of his weakness!" reiterated the perplexed Mr. Pickwick.

"He always falls down when he's took out o' the cab," continued the driver, "but when he's in it, we bears him up werry tight, and takes him in werry short, so as he can't werry well fall down; and we've got a pair o' precious large wheels on, so ven he *does* move, they run after him, and he must go on—he can't help it."

(Charles Dickens: *The Pickwick Papers*)

**Task 3:** *To compare, note the difference in expressing **speech, thought and action** in drama.*

*HAMLET comes forward, his eyes on the book*

*Queen.* But look where sadly the poor wretch comes reading,

*Polonius.* Away, I do beseech you both away, I'll board him presently, O give me leave.

*[the King and Queen hurry forth]*

How does my good Lord Hamlet?

*Hamlet.* Well, God-a-mercy.

*Polonius.* Do you know me, my lord?

*Hamlet.* Excellent well, you are a fishmonger.

*Polonius.* Not I, my lord.

*Hamlet.* Then I would you were so honest a man.

*Polonius.* Honest, my lord?

*Hamlet.* Ay sir, to be honest as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand.

*Polonius.* That's very true, my lord.

*Hamlet.* For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a good kissing carrion....have you a daughter?

*Polonius.* I have, my lord.

*Hamlet.* Let her not walk i'th'sun. Conception is a blessing, but as your daughter may conceive, friend look to't.

*[he reads again]*

*(Polonius.* How say you by that? Still harping on my daughter, yet he knew me not at first, a' said I was a fishmonger. A' is far gone, far gone, and truly in my youth I suffered much extremity for love, very near this....I'll speak to him again....What do you read, my lord?

*Hamlet.* Words, words, words.

*Polonius.* What is the matter, my lord?

*Hamlet.* Between who?

*Polonius.* I mean the matter that you read, my lord.

(William Shakespeare: *Hamlet*)

**Task 4:** *What deviations from everyday standard, both spoken and written, can be identified in the poem?*

Exultation is the going

Of an inland soul to sea,

Past the houses, past the headlands,

Into deep eternity.

Bred as we, among the mountains,

Can the sailor understand

The divine intoxication

Of the first league out from land?

(Emily Dickinson: *Selected Poems*)

**Practical task 5:** *Write a short prosaic text including some excited dialogue, e.g. a row over a husband's late arrival home, a complaint about a subordinate's disrespect towards his boss, a child's lying about school marks, etc.*

**Practical task 6:** *Write a short poem (4-6 lines) including all of the following words (and concepts): frost, spring, flower, loneliness.*