

**“I can tell the difference between fiction and reality.”  
Cross-fictionality and Mind-style in Political Rhetoric**

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# **“I can tell the difference between fiction and reality.” Cross-fictionality and Mind-style in Political Rhetoric**

Sam Browse & Mari Hatavara

## **Abstract**

In this article, we approach fictionality as a set of semiotic strategies prototypically associated with fictional forms of storytelling (Hatavara and Mildorf, 2017a, 2017b). Whilst these strategies are strongly associated with fiction, they might also be used in non-fictional contexts – or those in which the ontological status of the narrative is ambivalent – to create ‘cross-fictional’ rhetorical effects (Hatavara and Mildorf, 2017b). We focus on one such strategy – the representation of thought and consciousness. Using the concept of ‘mind style’ (Fowler, 1977 and 1996 [1986]; Leech and Short, 1980; Semino, 2007), we investigate the linguistic representation of the British Prime Minister, Theresa May’s, internal monologue in a satirical newspaper article. Throughout the article, the author uses cross-fictionality strategies to represent what May ‘really thinks’ as she delivers a speech to the Conservative Party conference. The stylistic analysis of the Prime Minister’s mind style facilitates an account of the elaborate and nuanced mixing of May and the author’s ideological perspectives throughout the piece. We argue that this cross-fictional, stylistic approach better accounts for the satirical effects of fictionality in the text than those which place a premium on authorial intention and the invented nature of the narrative discourse (for example, Nielsen, Phelan and Walsh, 2015).

**Keywords:** fictionality, cross-fictionality, mind style, Theresa May, satire, political discourse, newspaper discourse

## **Introduction**

Many approaches to fictionality are not interested in the narrative organization of fiction or fictionality, but focus instead on the referential status of the story content. Additionally, some recent approaches to fictionality actually contradict the very essence of fiction, that is the multilayered communication model including the separation of narrator from the author. Both of these observations can be identified in, for example, the rhetorical approach that defines fictionality as “the intentional use of invented stories and scenarios” (Nielsen, Phelan & Walsh, 2015, p. 62). The use of ‘invented’ refers to

the nature of the story content and the question of (non)referentiality whilst 'intentional' addresses authorial intention, therefore short-circuiting fictional communications multilayeredness. By multilayeredness, we mean the commonly held understanding that a text represents a narrator who tells about the experience of a character, and only the analysis of character's and narrator's discourses enables the reader to make assumptions of (implied) author's intentions (see Chatman, 1980, pp. 81-88, 148; Genette, 1988, pp. 13-15, 141).

For a narrative scholar, both these emphases seem unavailing. Narratologists can best contribute to the manifold discussion on fictionality through analysis of the narrative features and organization of the materials studied. Moreover, while fiction as a genre and fictionality as a feature of a text are not the same, their characteristics overlap. What is more, narratology lacks the means to enter the minds of authors (unless perhaps with the use of fictionality as a research method) that would be needed in order to study authorial intentions. Narratology is instead better equipped to analyze textual agents like narrators and characters as well as the narrative means and modes used to represent a world and the minds therein. The question of whether and in what ways fictional modes of mind representation affect the communicative frame of a nonfictional representation remains largely unstudied but has potential to contribute to questions of storytelling interaction and rhetorics.

While there is not room to do that thoroughly here, we refer to Seymour Chatman's take on the question of the implied author, once at least as actively debated a concept as fictionality is today. For Chatman, the analytically interesting question "is not whether the implied author *exists*" but "what we *get* from positing such a concept" (Chatman, 1990, 75; emphasis in the text). This article is first and foremost aimed at finding out what narratology with its tools for analyzing narrative minds, mostly develop by analyzing fictional minds, can contribute to the study of minds that are represented outside of the genre of fiction; what we can *get* from positing that fictionality is about narrative discourse modes.

We take a text analytical approach, using a narratological and stylistic methodology to concentrate on the features of the text that suggest fictionality. More precisely, we study how the mind of another is represented in a non-fictional narrative environment. To further illuminate the study of minds in "cross-fictional" instances where narratives globally marked as nonfiction use fictional discursive modes (Hatavara & Mildorf, 2017b), we introduce the concept of mind style to fictionality studies (see Fowler, 1977 & 1996 [1986]; Leech and Short, 1980; Semino, 2007). Previous narratological analyses of fictional modes in nonfictional environments have used a speech category approach and focalization theory (Hatavara & Mildorf, 2017a, 2017b; Hatavara, 2016; see

Herman, 2011, 6-17 for an overview of approaches). In this article, mind style is used to further develop methods of analyzing discursive modes of mind representation characteristic of fiction but used in nonfictional narrative environments. The analysis exposes how fictional narrative modes are used in narrative contestation over political issues. Our example comes from the political sphere and is a satirical commentary by John Rentoul on a conference speech by Theresa May, published in *The Independent* on October 3rd, 2018. The very title of the piece raises the question of mind representation and even attribution: "Theresa May's conference speech: what she said - and what she really meant". Through narratological and stylistic analysis, this article sheds light on larger concerns in narrative studies concerning narratives of vicarious experience as well as storytelling rights, empathy and irony.

### **Fictionality and narratology**

Mari Hatavara and Jarmila Mildorf (2017a & 2017b), suggest that fictionality studies should be more geared towards narrative features in order to counterbalance many of the recent fictionality definitions among narrative scholars focusing on the invented nature of the story and authorial intention. Similarly, in her overview of fictionality, Monika Fludernik (2018, p. 69) recommends that approaches linking fictionality to narrative need to explore their understandings of narrativity. Our approach also rests on the definition Fludernik (1996, p. 20, 2009, p. 6) offers for narrativity as the representation of human experientiality. We do not, however, agree with Fludernik's assertion that narrativity is "not a quality inhering in a text, but rather an attribute imposed on the text by the reader who interprets the text as narrative, thus *narrativizing* the text" (Fludernik, 2003, p. 244; emphasis in the text). We focus on the text, at the same time emphasizing that *how* experientiality is represented also affects *what* is or can be represented. Therefore we claim it is crucial to study semiotic features - in our case the linguistic properties of narrative representation.

The narrative-based signposts of fictionality have most often been understood in terms of the synchronic story-discourse relationship, the separation of narrator from the author, and the representation of mind (Cohn, 1990, p. 800; Grishakova, 2008, p. 65). Hatavara and Mildorf concentrate on those where the narrator represents the consciousness of another thus mixing two discursive subjects, using internal focalization or using verbs of consciousness (Hatavara & Mildorf, 2017a, pp. 67-68, 2017b, p. 392). Free indirect discourse is, of course, the prime example of a discursive blend. These linguistically identifiable features of the text make evident the basic distinctions of story

and discourse as well as narrator and character in fictional narratives: both distinctions are made subject to interpretation as the narrating person on the discursive level takes privileges over the story level where the experience of another is placed (Hatavara & Mildorf, 2017a, p. 80, 2017b, p. 405).

Hatavara and Mildorf (2017b, p. 405) emphasize that fictionality is a question of quality and not of genre, and therefore needs to be studied in a way sensitive to the semiotic factors of narrative, not confined to the authorial intentions or to the ontological status of the subject matter. With examples from life story interviews, oral history interviews and online museum exhibition narratives, Hatavara and Mildorf show real life storytellers present narratives of vicarious experience, that is they tell about the experiences of other nonfictional people who become characters in their stories. These fictional modes of mind and consciousness representation are used locally in narrative environments that are globally marked as non-fiction. Therefore, Hatavara and Mildorf (2017b) suggest the term cross-fictionality to denote narrative features of mind representation that are characteristic of fiction but found in globally nonfictional narrative environments.

This definition of cross-fictionality enables us to apply and develop narratological tools and methods for analyzing represented minds across the fact-fiction divide. In a recent article, Greger Andersson and Tommy Sandberg (2018) bring to a head the discussion on whether narratological theories and methodologies can or should be applied across fictional and nonfictional narrative realms. They argue for what they call the difference approach which regards fiction as a language game of its own, separate from other narrative instances. For this reason, Andersson and Sandberg (2018, pp. 242, 256-257) also suggest a need for a different type of narratology to be used in the study of fiction than those used in the study of other narratives in order not to fall prey to the simplifying theoretical practices of their postulated sameness approach. Our claim is that narrative discourse modes *do* travel across the factual or fictional divide and that it is therefore fruitful to test if the methodologies to analyze these modes would also work in both fact-fiction contexts. At the same time we do not claim sameness of minds represented in different narrative environments. Even though similarities exist in the narrative modes, this does not (necessarily) lead to sameness of functions or interpretative conclusions (cf. Hatavara & Mildorf, 2017a, pp. 79-80).

Fictionality studies that study textual features - such as the present article - are often confronted with the accusation of essentialism and a reference to a famous statement by Searle: "there is no trait or set of traits which all works of literature have in common and which could constitute the necessary and sufficient conditions for being a work of literature" (1975, p. 320). Indeed, fictionality is not an on-or-off-feature, like the genre of

fiction. However, discourse-narratological modes of language use can be characteristic of fiction but not bound to it alone (cf. Genette, 1990, pp. 772-773). There is therefore nothing essentializing in saying that some narrative discourse modes, like FID, have been mostly cultivated in fictional literature but are also used in other, nonfictional narratives. As Cohn (1999, p. 117) has pointed out, the example from a novel by Iris Murdock that Searle uses to prove his case actually contradicts it, since it showcases how portraying the workings of another mind is a convention in the novel. Cohn's question is, if any serious discourse would quote the thoughts of a person other than the speaker themselves. With the analysis of our example we hope to further demonstrate that cross-fictional representations do precisely that.

Understood as cross-fictionality, fictionality becomes not just a tautological feature of fiction or something completely separate from the basic features of fiction such as the author-narrator separation. Cross-fictional studies seek the characteristically fictional modes of mind representation outside the generic boundaries of fiction. Fiction as genre is a large scale phenomenon, which determines the status of a textual whole, a work (of art). This fact-fiction genre distinction depends mostly on paratextual signs that surround the text. Cross-fictional narrative modes, however, are identifiable on the textual level (Hatavara & Mildorf, 2017b). The approach is inspired by those first attempts to define fictionality in narrative terms (cf. Cohn, 1990) as well as groundbreaking studies that concentrate on some of these fictional modes of mind representation like FID and understand them not as exclusively literary but still characteristic of the fictional (see McHale, 1978). Therefore, we do not agree with Cohn's statement that "narrative fiction is the only literary genre, as well as the only kind of narrative, in which the unspoken thoughts, feelings, perceptions of a person other than the speaker can be portrayed" (Cohn, 1978, pp. 7-8), but still believe the portrayal of another person's mind is essential to fictionality.

Understanding fictionality this way emphasizes language as the material of fiction and the artistic nature of fiction: every art form necessarily modifies and shapes its material basis. Fiction, and literature at large has often been understood as a laboratory for ideas (cf. Grishakova, 2013, p. 7), and some understand fictionality as a way to test different event scenarios (cf. Nielsen, Phelan & Walsh, 2015). Based on our emphasis on fictionality as a quality of narrative discourse modes we also propose that fictionality is a mode of language use, where linguistic modes can be invented and tested. This is partially in line with Monika Fludernik's diachronic narratology where new narrative modes are developed and then become conventionalized. We argue that these conventions of language use may reach other than fictional narrative realms; fiction is,

after all, not separate from other linguistic practices even if it has its own generic features.

Hatavara and Mildorf (2017a, p. 67) note that '[t]he one fictionalizing technique most clearly distinguishable on the discursive level because of its linguistic markers is the representation of thought and consciousness'. The linguistic representation of consciousness in narrative discourse has also been a key concern of scholars in stylistics investigating 'mind style'. Given the importance of representations of consciousness to prototypical conceptions of fiction, in this paper we use the concept of mind style to operationalise an analysis of fictionality in the op-ed article by the journalist, John Rentoul.

### **Fictionality and mind style**

The term, 'mind style', was first coined by Fowler (1977, p. 103) 'to refer to any distinctive linguistic presentation of an individual mental self' and, later, 'the world view of an author, or a narrator, or a character constituted by the ideational structure of the text' (Fowler, 1996 [1986], p. 214; we return to the problems with this second definition shortly). As Leech and Short (1981, p. 153) suggest, 'mind style' is a particularly appropriate term where the linguistic choices made throughout a text consistently reflect a particular worldview or set of cognitive habits. Fowler (1977, 1996 [1986]) gives Halliday's (1971) influential stylistic analysis of Golding's *The Inheritors* as an example of such consistent linguistic choices. For the most part, the novel is narrated by a third person heterodiegetic narrator focalised through the perspective of Lok, the novel's Neanderthal protagonist. Halliday (1971, p. 350) argued that the grammatical choices in *The Inheritors* represent Lok's primitive 'limitations of understanding'. He explains that '[verb] processes are seldom represented as resulting from an experiential cause; in those cases where they are, the agent is seldom a human being; and where it is a human being, it is seldom one of the [Neanderthals]' (Halliday, 1971, p. 353; for further discussion of mind style in *The Inheritors*, see Black, 1993; Browse, 2018a; Clark, 2009; Hoover, 1999). These transitivity patterns reflect Lok's inability to understand patterns of cause and effect (although see Hoover 1999, who disputes and refines this analysis). Although Halliday (1971) did not use the term, for Fowler (1977, 1996 [1986]) these consistent linguistic choices constitute Lok's idiosyncratic mind style.

Although both Fowler (1977) and Leech and Short (1981) suggest that analyses of authors, narrators and characters' mind styles are possible, to date the focus has been on atypical character or narrator mind styles, particularly those that are neuro-atypical (Bockting, 1994; Fowler, 1977, 1996 [1986]; Harrison, 2017; Semino, 2011, 2014;

Semino and Swindlehurst, 1996), primitive (Black, 1993; Browse, 2018a; Clark, 2009; Fowler, 1977, 1996 [1986]; Halliday, 1971; Hoover, 1999), suffering from alcoholic blackouts (Giovannelli, 2018), criminally sociopathic (Semino, 2002), or even vampiric (Nuttall, 2015). It is right that the focus has been on the narrator and character levels of narrative discourse. As Semino (2007, p. 169) notes, the concept of mind style should be differentiated from “the more general notion of ‘style’” (see also Semino and Swindlehurst, 1996, p. 145), understood as the linguistic patterns and peculiarities constituting an author or speaker’s idiolectal use of language. For this reason, we suggest that the term ‘mind style’ should only be applied to textual representations of consciousness that involve crossing what Stockwell (2009), in a related discussion, has described as a ‘fictionality boundary’, be that an ontological boundary (in the case of fictional characters) or an epistemological one (in the case of real people whose thoughts we can never really know). Indeed, the latter constitutes a case of cross-fictional mind representation - a case in which a real mind is fictionalized in a text.

A related concept to mind style is ‘world view’. Fowler (1996 [1986], p. 214) conflates the two terms, suggesting that the former is a less cumbersome term for ‘point of view on the ideological plane’. Indeed, discussions of ideological point of view and mind style have often appeared alongside each other (for example, Simpson 1993). As above, Semino (2007) similarly warns against such a conflation. A notable feature of ideological perspectives is that they are shared by groups of people. It is therefore not sufficient to conceive of mind style *only* in terms of ideological point of view, because mind styles reflect the particular idiosyncratic perspectives of narrators or characters; it is consequently also important to include their individual cognitive habits and fictional mental functioning. Mind styles, then, can be defined as the combined textual representation of a narrator or character’s worldview alongside their internal mental processes, such as ‘thoughts, memories, intentions, desires, evaluations, feelings [and] emotions’ (Semino 2007, p. 169).

Stylistic analyses of the linguistic representation of fictional consciousness have encompassed a wide array of discourse structures. Following Halliday (1971), Fowler’s (1977 & 1996 [1986]) earliest investigations deal with grammatical transitivity and participant relationships (see also Ji and Shen, 2004; Leech and Short, 1981, pp. 152-153; Semino, 2002, p. 101) but also under-lexicalisation – ‘when a non-specific noun [...] is used to refer to something for which a specific word exists’ (Black, 1993, p. 41). For instance, in *The Inheritors*, Lok uses the term ‘white bone thing’ to describe an arrowhead, which reflects his ignorance of *homo sapiens* hunting technology (for analyses of under-lexicalisation and mind style, see Black, 1993; Leech and Short, 1981; Semino, 2002). Scholars have also focused on the way that syntactic structures



of different complexity might construct different mind styles (Leech and Short, 1981, pp. 164-165; Semino, 2007, p. 167) and on the use of deictic words (Semino, 2011). In addition, many researchers have examined the use of metaphor in the creation of mind style (Leech and Short, 1981, p. 160), with these analyses often taking influence from Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory (see Black, 1993; Semino, 2002, 2007; Semino and Swindlehurst, 1996). According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), conventional linguistic metaphors (such as 'we were good friends, but *drifted apart*') suggest underlying conceptual mappings between different aspects of human experience, such that one domain structures another (our sense of SPACE or PROXIMITY, here, structuring our conceptualisation of SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS).

If metaphorical mappings between different conceptual domains structure the way we think, then it follows that a character or narrator's unusual reliance on a particular conceptual metaphor, or the repetition of a novel conceptual metaphor, form a part of their mind style. For example, Semino (2002) demonstrates that Clegg, the sociopathic lepidopterist and narrator of John Fowles' *The Collector*, tends to repeat the misogynistic metaphor WOMEN ARE BUTTERFLIES throughout the novel. She argues that this habit of conceptualisation is a feature of Clegg's idiosyncratic mind style (for further analyses of mind style from a cognitive linguistic perspective, see also Harrison [2017], Giovanelli [2018] and Nuttall [2015, 2018], who all use cognitive grammar [Langacker, 1987, 1991, 2008] to explore the manner in which mind styles are constructed). Finally, a feature of some work has been to examine the pragmatic strategies used to construct unusual mind styles (Clark, 2009; Semino, 2014). For instance, Semino (2014) outlines the way in which the mind styles of autistic characters in three novels include atypical politeness strategies, problems with informativeness and relevance in interaction, and a difficulty in understanding figurative language.

To this list of discourse structures, we would add modality. As Thompson (2014, p. 70) suggests, the use of modality creates "a kind of interpersonal 'aura' of the speaker's attitude around [a] proposition". The use of modality, then, is important for constructing a speaker – or writer's – point of view in a text (Simpson, 1993). The study of modality was traditionally confined to the closed set of modal auxiliary verbs (Nuyts, 2006; Perkins, 1983). However, Simpson (1993) outlines three kinds of modality – epistemic (that which relates to knowledge and perception), deontic (duties and obligation) and boulomaic (wishes and desires) – and broadens the scope of the term to encompass lexical verbs (for example, 'she *seemed* happy' – which is epistemic modality) and even whole phrases ('I would rather' – boulomaic). This is a useful framework for analysing point of view – which we have suggested is an important part of mind style – and should therefore be included in any list of discursive strategies that might contribute to the creation of a mind style. The list is not meant as exhaustive, nor is the claim being made

that the use of these discursive structures necessarily engenders mind style. Rather, they constitute a list of discourse features that in some contexts have been shown to have the functional affordance of constructing a particular worldview or representation of a particular set of cognitive habits. For that reason they form the starting point of our analysis of cross-fictionality and mind style in the following section.

### **Fictionality and mind style in political punditry**

As we have noted, mind style in narrative texts involves crossing either an ontological or epistemological boundary – textually representing the internal mental functioning of minds that are either not real or that can never really be known – and is therefore a key ‘signpost of fictionality’ (Cohn, 1990; see also Hatavara and Mildorf, 2017a, 2017b). Whereas discourse modes of mind and consciousness representation that rely on speech categories and distinguish narrator’s and characters’ points of view predominantly rely on verb tenses, personal pronouns and deictic markers, mind style enables detecting a wider array of idiosyncratic linguistic features to analyze how the mind of another may be represented in a cross-fictional manner. In this section, we analyse how John Rentoul, the political editor of *The Independent*, ‘models’ (c.f. Stockwell, 2009) the mind of Theresa May, the British Prime Minister, as she delivers a speech to the 2018 Conservative Party Conference. To do this, he creates a distinctive mind style for May, the features of which we describe below.

#### ***Constructing May’s Mind Style***

In the op-ed ‘Theresa May’s conference speech: what she said – and what she really meant’ Rentoul alternates between direct reports of what May said (signalled with the reporting clause ‘what she said’) followed by his commentary on the speech (indicated with the clause, ‘what she meant’ and graphologically signalled with italics). This unpacking of politicians’ public verbal performances is a regular feature of political punditry (Browse, 2018b) and Rentoul is certainly not the only journalist to use this style of reporting (for example, see Clark, 2015, or Perkins, 2016). However, whereas other commentators tend to offer explanations for the quoted lines in their own voice, what perhaps distinguishes Rentoul is the way in which he represents May’s motives; the commentary comes in the form of direct thought representation (see Leech and Short, 1980, Ch.10), or quoted interior monologue to use Cohn’s (1978) terminology. Indeed, this style of reporting the Prime Minister’s thoughts adds to the satirical quality of the piece insofar as it echoes a convention in women’s magazines of “translating” the discourse of prospective romantic partners.

The most obvious indicator of this direct thought representation is the pronominal choices used in the text and other forms of what Semino (2011) calls 'person deixis' – deictic words that index the personal and social relationships between people (see also Stockwell, 2002). Throughout the 'what she meant' sections of the piece, 'I', 'we', 'us', 'my', and 'our' all refer to May or the Conservative Party, and 'you', the audience. The thoughts attributed to May sometimes also include vocative addresses to other politicians, for example:

**What she said:** I've seen the trailers for Bodyguard, and let me tell you – it wasn't like that in my day.

**What she meant:** *Unlike some people, Boris Johnson, I can tell the difference between fiction and reality.*

In the quote from the speech, May alludes to a television series, 'Bodyguard', about a policeman whose job it is to protect the British Home Secretary, a position May held prior to her assumption of the premiership. Here, in the representation of her thought, the quote is interpreted as an attack on her Conservative rival for the party leadership, Boris Johnson. The use of vocatives ('Boris Johnson', and elsewhere in the article, 'ladies and gentlemen'), in addition to the pronominal choices, indicate that the viewpoint in the 'what she meant' sections should be interpreted as May's. Indeed, in this specific example, the clash of tone between the reported speech and thought also contributes to the character of the mind style created for May. The original section of speech is an appeal to the politician's ethos – she is demonstrating her awareness of mass culture and uses a colloquial expression 'in my day', both of which constitute a form of 'public construction of normalness' (Fairclough, 2000, p. 99) and assume a shared familiarity with May's political career. Conversely, the reported thought is not an attempt to build rapport with an audience, but is instead an attack on a political opponent, Boris Johnson, whom she is represented as implying cannot 'tell the difference between fiction and reality'. This contrast in the interpersonal quality of the speech and thought representation contributes to a dissembling mind style that runs through the whole text.

May's mind style is also constructed throughout the text through modality, evaluative language and what Simpson (1993) terms *verba sentiendi* – language that presupposes some form of cognisor:

**What she said:** Security is the bedrock of freedom... the freedom that swept across Europe when the Soviet Union collapsed, and nations were reborn in sovereignty and independence.

**What she meant:** *what Jeremy Hunt should have said in his ridiculous leadership bid the other day.*

In this example, May's remarks on foreign policy are interpreted as an implicit criticism of her Foreign Secretary, Jeremy Hunt. Hunt had previously given a well-received speech to the conference which many perceived as an attempt to position the minister for a leadership challenge. May's supposed criticisms are constructed through the use of the deontic modal, 'should' and the evaluative pre-modifier, 'ridiculous'. As in the previous example, the mind style constructed in the 'what she meant' section is at odds with the tone of the reported speech. In the quotation from the speech, May uses a variety of words – 'security', 'freedom', 'nations', 'reborn', 'sovereignty', 'independence' – that all suggest a solemn register of statecraft which is contrasted in the reported thought with another attack on a colleague. Again, the effect is to portray the Prime Minister as disingenuous; she is not really concerned with the political values she lists, but in using them to jockey for position against her opponents in the Conservative Party. *Verba sentiendi* and evaluative language are later used to resume the reproaches of Boris Johnson in a similar fashion:

**What she said:** Britain isn't afraid to leave with no deal if we have to. But we need to be honest about it. Leaving without a deal – introducing tariffs and costly checks at the border – would be a bad outcome for the UK and the EU.

**What she meant:** *I am not afraid of Alexander Boris de Pfeffel Johnson.*

As before, the discussion of statecraft – the UK's negotiations with the EU over Brexit – is reframed as an attack on an internal political enemy. Rentoul uses *verba sentiendi* to formulate a claim that May makes about her emotional state of mind (she is 'not afraid'). The claim itself is suspicious; in a similar manner to the disnarrated, negation foregrounds an expectation (see Karttunen 2008, p. 420; and also Nahajec, 2009) - in this instance, the expectation that the Prime Minister might actually be afraid after all. It should also be noted that Johnson is here referred to by his full name, 'Alexander Boris de Pfeffel Johnson'. Johnson is known as a "hard Brexiteer" in favour of leaving the EU without a trade deal. This group of politicians often use right wing populist rhetorical strategies, constructing an identity between themselves and "the man on the street". The naming strategy is evaluative because the aristocratic background indexed by Johnson's lengthy and (ironically) German full name casts some doubt on his claim to represent the will of ordinary people.

As these three examples demonstrate, a key pragmatic feature of May's mindstyle is the way her directly reported thoughts clash with the reported speech from the conference address. This dissonance portrays May as cynical and dissembling: where

she attempts to form relationships with her audience, she is actually thinking of her opponents; where she claims to be concerned with great issues of state, she is in fact preoccupied with the internal politics of the Conservative Party.

### *Thoughts embedded in thoughts*

The analysis is complicated by a third voice in the text which can be attributed not only to May's words or a projected internal monologue, but to Rentoul's personal evaluation of the speech:

**What she said:** Let's say it loud and clear: Conservatives will always stand up for a politics that unites us rather than divides us. That used to be Labour's position too. But when I look at its leadership today, I worry it's no longer the case.

**What she meant:** *Let us divide ourselves from that Marxist fanatic while spouting platitudes about unity.*

Characteristically, the 'what she said' section contradicts the 'what she meant' section; the former is a claim to promote unity, the latter a call for division. There are a number of linguistic features in the first clause ('let us divide ourselves from that Marxist fanatic') that suggest this is May's perspective. The thought is an imperative addressed to her audience, the pronominal choice 'us' and the reflexive pronoun 'ourselves' all refer to the Prime Minister and the Conservative Party, she uses the evaluative naming strategy 'that Marxist fanatic' (a reference to the left-wing leader of the opposition, Jeremy Corbyn), and the distal deictic 'that' to signal 'our' ideological distance from the leader of the Labour Party. All these linguistic features construct an interpersonal and ideological locus consonant with May's. In the following clause, though, she describes her own linguistic behaviour as 'spouting platitudes about unity'. Both 'spouting' and 'platitudes' connote a negative attitude to what the Conservative politician has said which is marked, given that this is a thought attributed to her. There are two interpretations, here. One is to say that whilst this is presented as May's thought, it is actually Rentoul's more or less overt comment on what she has said – he is explicitly criticizing her, in his own voice, for being vacuous. Indeed, that this is a metatextual comment about the speech connotes the presence of a narrator at a higher diegetic level to May's internal consciousness, thus supporting this view. Another interpretation is to say that this is *also* what the Prime Minister thinks – that she too believes she is 'spouting platitudes'. From this perspective, May is at fault precisely because she *agrees* with Rentoul that the speech lacks any substance and yet cynically mouths the words for political advantage.

A similar blurring of the journalist and politician's voices is repeated later in the article:

**What she said:** we have fundamental strengths as a country... English... global language... free trade... But our greatest strength of all is the talent and diversity of our people.

**What she meant:** *Our greatest export is prefabricated slabs of cliché.*

With the exception of the reporting clause, 'what she meant', there is nothing else to suggest this is May's thought ('our', here, refers generically to the whole nation, which is inclusive of, but not limited to, the Prime Minister and members of the Conservative Party. It could therefore index the speaker as Rentoul or indeed anyone belonging to that generic group). As in the previous example, there is a similar ambiguity over to whom the opinion should be attributed. Certainly, the pejorative noun phrase 'prefabricated slabs of cliché' suggests this is the journalist's opinion, but it could also be May's. Again, if it is the former, then the Prime Minister is criticised as vacuous, or, if the latter, cynical. Interestingly, there is a further ambiguity in the reported speech. The 'prefabricated slabs of cliché' are elliptically listed, 'English...global language... free trade'. This is mimetic in two senses: first, of the experience of someone who is in the conference hall but not really listening to the speech (presumably because they have heard the clichés before); second, of the style in which a speech writer or advisor might list a series of talking points. The speech itself, then, is also narrated from an ambiguous perspective.

At times, this embedding of Rentoul's thoughts in May's is more subtle, for example:

**What she said:** No institution embodies our principles as Conservatives more profoundly or more personally than our National Health Service.

**What she meant:** *Substitute "as the Labour Party" and Corbyn could have said the same last week. I am not letting them own that territory.*

**What she said:** We have had disagreements in this party about Britain's membership of the EU for a long time. So, it is no surprise that we have had a range of different views expressed this week. But my job as prime minister is to do what I believe to be in the national interest.

**What she meant:** *The Tony Blair gambit: win points for candour – divided party – then use it to show leadership. I'll do what I believe to be right even if my party hates it.*

In both quotations from the speech, May is talking about 'principles' and what she 'believe[s] to be in the national interest'. Contrastingly, in both subsequent 'what she meant' sections this is reframed as a form of political positioning. In the second sentence of each, it is May's perspective that is constructed through the use of pronominal choices ('I am not letting them own that territory'; 'I'll do what I believe to be right even if my party hates it'). In the first, however, it is unclear who is speaking; one could interpret them either as Rentoul's commentary on what he perceives as May's political manoeuvring, or as May's cynical self-awareness of the rhetorical performance she is giving. If compared to Cohn's (1978) model of consciousness representation, these "what she meant" sections can be interpreted not as quotations from May's inner speech but coming close to psychonarration, where the narrating voice takes over to portray the deepest, perhaps even unconscious feelings and desires of a character. This is the mode where the narrator most clearly takes discursive and epistemological advantage over a character in portraying inner states not consciously known to the character themselves (see Palmer 2005).

Ambivalence over the speaker and the point of view is also reflected in Rentoul's use of metaphor:

**What she said:** The British people need to know that the end is in sight. And our message to them must be this: we get it.

**What she meant:** *The light at the end of the tunnel is a train coming in our direction.*

Here, May is talking about the conclusion of the Brexit process. The metaphor Rentoul uses is a play on the English expression 'there's light at the end of the tunnel', which means that things are bad now but look as though they might be getting better. The expression relies on a conventional conceptual mapping between brightness and a positive value judgement (LIGHT IS GOOD/DARK IS BAD). In the reported thought section, this conventional mapping is flipped to imply the opposite of what May means in the quotation from the speech. Rather than the light being a sign that we are about to leave the bad situation, it is instead a portent of something more dangerous to come. As before, we can either interpret this directly as Rentoul's opinion or as May's as well.

Whereas the previous examples all involved some meta-linguistic commentary ('spouting platitudes' or 'cliché'), this use of metaphor is interesting because the blurring of voices suggests that this textual representation of May might agree her Brexit negotiations will end in disaster (indeed, later she is reported as thinking 'prepare for the next recession'). The journalist's critique, here, is not only directed at the style May uses and the way it positions her in relation to her political opponents, but at the content of

her argument; that is, she is either deluded or, if we assume that this is not only Rentoul's opinion about the likely outcome of Brexit but that he believes May thinks this too, then he is accusing her of actively misleading electors. What is more, it may even be interpreted as Rentoul - as the narrator - exposing May's deepest fear, one she herself denies feeling (cf. the previous 'I'm not afraid') but which nevertheless hunts her in the form of a metaphorical train she feels approaching.

## **Conclusion**

Our article demonstrates that fictionality studies benefits from analyzing narrative features characteristic of fiction in nonfictional narrative environments. Using the concept of mind style in addition to speech category-based or focalization-centered methods to study mind representation helps to further elaborate the ideological and linguistic mixing of points of view in cross-fictional representations, to pinpoint how the mind of another person can be portrayed as if known, transparent or accessible (cf. Herman, 2011) to the speaker or author of a nonfictional narrative. The analysis further demonstrates that cross-fictional mind representation introduces interpretative uncertainty as to whose point of view is put forward in ambiguous parts of the text (cf. Hatavara & Mildorf, 2017a, p. 80). Therefore, an affordance of cross-fictional mind presentation is that authors can hint at different possibilities and internal contradictions in the mental interiors they represent.

The question of whose mind - feelings, intentions, desires - is represented in the text can be dealt with in terms of cross-fictionality in a more nuanced way than if we assume a binary conception of fictionality based on non/referentiality, as exemplified in Nielsen, Phelan and Walsh's (2015) approach. Fictional modes of mind representation create local points of discursive blending and uncertainty within the globally nonfictional text that may be used for rhetorical purpose. The text we have chosen to analyse is a form of political satire. As Simpson (2003, p. 98) notes, 'a peculiarity of satirical discourse [is] that it can at once sustain a text which is part "referential", part "fictional"'. Moreover, it often relies on metonymic relationships between the fictional and the referential components that amplify and exaggerate aspects of the satirical target (Simpson, 2003, p. 129). Whilst the exact thoughts attributed to May are 'invented' (Nielsen, Phelan & Walsh, 2015), the point of the satire is that there is, according to Rentoul, nonetheless some truth to them - they are an exaggerated caricature of what May 'really meant' and, crucially, they say something about the kind of dissembling and cynical politician he thinks May 'really' is. Perspectives such as the rhetorical approach which make a clear distinction between invention and reality cannot account for this ontological



ambivalence. Conversely, treating fictionality as a quality that is discursively signalled in a text - as we have done here - relegates the ontological status of the subject matter to a secondary concern. One of the affordances of cross-fictionality, then, is that it better accounts for the way in which fictional modes of mind representation can be used as a strategy to argue a point in the real world.

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