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## Free Indirect Discourse in Medieval and Modern French Literature

### 1 Definition

Based on Oswald Ducrot's theory of enunciation (1984, 1989), Free Indirect Discourse (FID) can be defined as a unique enunciative act in which the locutor (responsible for the enunciative act and denoted where necessary by *je*) reports the perspective of another speaker (the enunciator) in his discourse without it being explicitly indicated in the utterance that said perspective is being reported. In other words, the speaker neither subordinates the enunciator's discourse to a declarative verb nor coordinates it with another subordinate reported discourse even though subordinated reported discourse (expressed in Indirect Discourse (ID)) can be found in the cotext immediately preceding the FID. Contrary to what occurs in ID, the locutor and the enunciator whose perspectives are reported are not confined to any specific part of the utterance. In narrative terms, FID is thus a device by which the narrator/locutor integrates a character's/enunciator's discourse into his own speech without interrupting the flow of the story – that is, without having to open quotation marks or employ an introductory formula for Direct Discourse (DD).

In modern French, FID is characterized by the presence of features of DD (direct questions, exclamations, deictics and colloquialisms attributed to the quoted locutor, etc.) reported in the fashion of ID entailing the shifting of pronouns and tenses to refer to the quoting locutor, but without syntactic dependency on a reporting clause and thus without direct subordination to a *verbum dicendi* or *sentienti* or coordination with a previous reported clause. Certain shifters such as *ici* (here), *maintenant* (now), and *aujourd'hui* (today) may refer to the reported clause's context of utterance.

Contrary to Jean Rychner (1989, 74) and many others, specialists studying FID in English recognize the presence of parentheses, or what Ehrlich (1990, 11) and Fludernik (1993, 164, 285) call “sentences containing parentheticals.” The grammatical subject of the FID parenthesis must correspond to the person whose speech is quoted. As for the reported clause's pronouns and verbal persons, the frame of reference depends on the parenthesis, the agreement of tenses between reported clause and parenthesis being obligatory in most cases but, as in any FID, these occurrences usually contain DD structures (exclamations, deictics such as *maintenant*, etc.). This kind of FID nevertheless approximates ID insofar as the parenthesis denotes the enunciator and makes explicit reference to this being a reported discourse. That said, there is no subordinating conjunction linking this discourse to the parenthesis, which can appear relatively far from the beginning of the utterance.

For standard references with historical accounts of the FID, see Cohn (1978), Fludernik (1993, 1996), McHale (1978, 2014), Pascal (1977), Rosier (1999), and Strauch (1974, 1975). The three essential points underlying the present approach to FID in French literature are as follows:

- 1) FID existed before the nineteenth century both as a form *and* as a Speech and Thought Presentation (S&TP) strategy.
- 2) FID can take various forms depending on its context.
- 3) FID has different functions depending on its context and its type (speech or thought/attitude).

Context can be understood, for present purposes, as knowledge of former and future events in the text, knowledge of what the characters are or are not aware of, and knowledge of their ways of reacting and thinking. Context may also refer to the means by which narrators present themselves and, more generally, to the requirements of the literary genre in question.

The discursive context, i.e. the ‘cotext’ that comes immediately before and after a FID segment in a text, is also essential to identify FID for it cannot be considered solely within the limits of the sentence. This is because the formal characteristics generally attributed to FID (imperfect tense, third person, etc.) are not specific to it and therefore do not always allow for differentiation between an utterance in FID and a narrative utterance (Ehrlich 1990). In cases where ambiguity may arise, examination of the text surrounding the utterance may thus reveal the presence of FID. For example, interpreting an utterance as FID is made easier if this utterance is related to a character’s previous thought or speech reports by coreferential expressions or connectives. Likewise, the presence of an imperfective verbal form (progressive, *-ing* form in English, imperfect tense in modern French) can only express FID if superposed onto a previous predicate denoting a character’s speech or thought.

The specificity of FID is that it constitutes reported discourse (speech or thoughts) but without being necessarily signposted as such, at least within the utterance under consideration. Consequently, the signs of reported discourse must frequently be sought outside FID itself. In the cotext directly preceding a stretch of FID, an instance of ID or the “narrative report of a speech act” (Leech and Short 1981, 184) can often be found, a category that includes reports of thoughts or attitudes. Thus in many cases, the cotext explicitly indicates the presence of discourse, whether it is reported or not and whether this is discourse involving two characters or just one (self-reflection). FID has a relationship with this cotext of both continuity and discontinuity. For example, in some cases of ID, FID can continue the reported discourse but is no longer connected to the introductory declarative verb by subordination or coordination. The co-text directly following the FID usually indicates strong discontinuity such as changes of tenses, of grammatical subjects, and of topics.

FID cannot be associated with one unique function or specific meaning. It is polyvalent, partly because it occupies a medial position between DD and ID, and also because it constitutes a marked method of representing discourse, be it speech or thought. The differentiation between FID reporting speech (FID/speech) and FID reporting thought (FID/thought) is not a problem of taxonomy, for these two types of FID relate to two discrete issues, or rather two discrete questions: “Who is speaking in the text?” and “Who is seeing?” In narration, it is always the narrator who speaks, even if on occasion s/he reports characters’ speech through DD, ID or FID. However, the narrator is not the only one to “see,” and the perspective of other characters can be included in the narration (Rimmon-Kenan 2002 [1983], 72). FID/thought is most intimately tied to perspective and focalization while FID/speech pertains more to narrative control by the narrator.

FID reporting thought (FID/thought) is probably the most difficult kind of FID to spot, since it is less frequently marked and thus occasionally confused with narration. In most cases, context can be as helpful as cotext when sorting these matters out. For instance, if the text’s narrator is perceived as impersonal or neutral, an utterance containing a value judgement is more likely to be in FID. This involves a vicious circle, since the use of FID contributes to how the narrator is perceived.

On the other hand, the presence of FID/thought is closely related to what types of focalization are at work within a text. For present purposes, the model of focalization proposed by Rimmon-Kenan (2002 [1983], 72–86) will be adopted. In essence, the story is presented through a certain perspective or viewpoint, yielding the text’s focalization. In external focalization, the narrator is the focalizing agent, the view over events is panoramic and panchronic, and knowledge of the events is in principle complete. In internal narration, the *locus* of focalization is situated within the diegetic world, the focalizing agent generally being a character. The view over events is synchronic, and the knowledge of events is reduced to however much the focalizing agent knows. Just as the focalizing agent can be external or internal to the events being represented, the focalized “object” can be seen either from without or from within. This gives us the following table:

External focalization	- from without
	- from within
Internal focalization	- from without
	- from within

Since FID/thought reproduces what is happening in the mind of the character whose perspective is being reported, the device necessarily entails focalization from within. It is more difficult to say whether FID/thought belongs uniquely to internal focalization, which some believe can include the narrator's perspective alongside that of the character/enunciator (Ducrot 1989, 188; Rychner 1980, 97; Bruña-Cuevas 1988, 436). Rimmon-Kenan (2002 [1983], 81) points out that formulae such as "he thought," "it seemed to him," and "he felt" can be found in external focalization from within, with examples of this type of focalization generally containing ID. Should it thus be concluded that the difference between ID and FID is that they belong to two different types of focalization? This is difficult to imagine, especially in cases where FID follows ID or contains a parenthesis like 'in his view' or 'it seemed to her'.

FID reporting speech (FID/speech) is less clearly linked to focalization, despite Schmid's view that "FID rarely serves the reproduction of outer speech" and that "cases in which it is used for the representation of spoken discourse ... are almost always examples not of the reproduction of spoken discourse itself, but rather of the *perception* of the outer speech by one of the characters" (Schmid 2010, 148). In fact, as will be shown below, the narrator of a text may simply use FID/speech to add colour to the narration with his characters' idioms rather than using it as a vehicle for their thoughts and inner perceptions. In using FID/speech instead of, or after, a DD/speech, the narrator might seem to tighten his grip on his characters' discourse while retaining the vivacity and realism peculiar to the direct mode. Furthermore, in some cases, the characters themselves use FID/speech within their own discourse quoted in DD, for example when intimating another character what he or she shall say in the future (see below).

The views on FID adopted here, and in particular the importance given to co-text and context in order to identify FID, are in line with Monika Fludernik's approach (1993, 1996, and in this volume). They are also in agreement with Laurence Rosier's seminal book *Le Discours rapporté: Histoire, théories, pratiques* (1999), except for one important point: wherever necessary, FID is signaled by the transposition of grammatical person (verb ending, pronouns, possessives, etc.) and only optionally by the transposition of tenses. By contrast, Rosier (1999, 280–281) considers that the use of the present tense (even with a transposition of grammatical person) signals Free Direct Discourse (i.e. direct discourse without *verbum dicendi* (FDD)) rather than FID. Finally, the views adopted here are also in broad agreement with Schmid (2010 and in this volume) in acknowledging that identifying FID is not always easy in practice because of its intrinsically "mixed" nature resulting from the combination of techniques (DD and ID) and voices (speaker and enunciator[s]), which can give rise to the interference of narrator's text and characters' text, or, more concisely, 'text interference' to use Schmid's words (2010,137).

## 2 FID in Medieval French Literature

### 2.1 Previous Work on Medieval FID

FID has traditionally been considered as a deliberate stylistic device from the nineteenth century onwards (with the exception of La Fontaine in the seventeenth century). The main reason for this assumption is that FID was long perceived as a development in how the narrator manipulates fiction and presents the perspectives of the characters. According to this view, FID is supposedly too elaborate a structure for medieval literature; several studies on FID openly exhibit a contempt for the narrators of medieval texts, deemed incapable of differentiating between their perspective and that of their characters. Lips (1926, 125–126)

states that in Old French what sometimes appeared to be FID were in fact cases of unbridled ID where the medieval storyteller subjectively mixed his characters' preoccupations into his own thoughts, thereby creating ambiguity. In her view therefore, this was not real FID, which she saw as a fixed, 'objective' grammatical form that would not allow for any hesitation regarding the identity and objectivity of the writer.

In a similar vein, Florian Coulmas (1986, 10) is keen to cite Baxtin (1986, 150) on the subject of Old French: "Therefore no clearly marked boundaries between direct and indirect discourse existed then. The Old French storyteller was as yet unable to separate the figures of his fantasy from his own 'I'."

These views call for two observations, one regarding the confusion of perspectives, the other regarding subjectivity. It is not correct to speak of perspectives being-reduced into one in medieval literature. This is evident in early examples of elaborate psychology and subtle dialogue, as in the romances of Chrétien de Troyes, thus countering any suggestion of the confusion of perspectives. Sung epic poems such as the medieval French *chansons de geste* are no more deserving of this characterization. At issue is the playfulness of perspectives rather than their indistinguishable mixture. Suzanne Fleischman (1990) demonstrated as much by analyzing the use of the present tense in epics. It was found that a blend of pasts and presents, previously regarded as a confusion of tense usage, was in fact a consequence of the originally oral nature of the *chansons de geste*. Also calling for re-examination is the problem of subjectivity. What is meant by "objective narrator"? The term 'impersonal narrator' is more appropriate but actually FID can occur even when a narrator is 'personal' such as in medieval epics, where the storyteller openly addresses his audience and sides with his characters.

The second reason for FID supposedly being limited to "modern" written discourse is the restrictive definition of its form. In modern French, FID is generally identified by the use of the imperfect and related tenses (past future, pluperfect). The situation in Old French, however, is quite different.

Lips (1926) sought to prove the nonexistence of FID in medieval French. To do so, she examined three epics (*La Chanson de Roland*, *Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, and *La Conquête de Jerusalem*), also drawing from the chrestomathies of medieval writers such as Clédat, Paris, Jeanroy, and Langlois. This corpus is insufficient for qualifying the entirety of medieval French, and it is unreliable, given that some of the editions she used were heavily edited versions of the texts found in the actual manuscripts. Later, Verschoor (1959) examined some twenty texts including *chansons de geste*, *lais*, courtly romances, chronicles, etc. He did not deny the existence of medieval FID – quite the contrary, even though his analysis of the corpus was not entirely convincing. He occasionally called FID what is merely a subordinate clause dependent on an ID subordinate clause, as in the following example:

(1) *La Mort Le Roi Artu* (13<sup>th</sup> c.)

Lors revindrent au roi, si li distrent que a Lancelot avoient failli, *car il s'en estoit alez pie ça et en a avec lui menez toz ses chevaliers*. Quant li rois l'entent, si dist...

\*Then they came back to the king, they told him that they had missed Lancelot *because he had gone away some time ago and has taken with him all his knights*. When the king hears this, he said... (Verschoor 1959, 95; emphasis added)

Cerquiglini (1984) devoted an article to the study of medieval FID, yet for all the examples he gave, he did not seek to provide a systematic study of an entire corpus of medieval French texts. In *La parole médiévale* (1981), he identified instances of FID in Robert de Boron's *Estoire del Graal*, noting their disappearance in the work's prose versions. Bruña-Cuevas (1988) examined FID in works attributed to Marie de France, notably her collections of *lais* and of fables, and *L'espurgatoire saint Patrice*, but it failed to adopt a diachronic perspective. Ultimately, it was Rychner (1987, 1989) who paid the most attention to medieval FID (which he termed "subjective discourse") through his studies of Marie de France's *lais* and

subsequently in his posthumous book, *La narration des sentiments, des pensées et des discours dans quelques œuvres des XII<sup>e</sup> et XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles* (1990). The analysis that follows has benefited greatly from Rychner's insights although it is based on a more comprehensive formal description of FID, particularly with regard to the surrounding cotext.

Buridant (2000, 677–680) offers a simple but comprehensive overview of FID in medieval French, focusing on various literary genres and giving a broad range of examples. The recently published *Grande grammaire historique du français (GGHF)* devotes a section to “discours représenté” (Marchello-Nizia et al. 2020, 1702–1728) which includes a discussion of Cerquiglini's (1984) and Marnette's (1998) work on FID in medieval French. The *GGHF* highlights the difficulty of distinguishing between Free Indirect Discourse (‘discours indirect libre’) and Freed Indirect Discourse (‘discours indirect émancipé’), noting that the latter might be accidental – not a deliberate strategy but the “petering out” of a stretch of ID. Similarly, FID with inserted parentheticals is not seen as FID by the *GGHF* but as a separate category called “discours indirect régi sans subordination,” bizarrely deemed to have existed “as early as” the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (e.g., in La Fontaine's fables) whereas similar examples already existed in medieval French such as in the following example (FID is italicized):

(2) *Chanson de Roland* (late 11<sup>th</sup> c.), ll. 150–155

« Voet par hostages, ço dist li Sarrazins,  
Dunt vos avrez u dis u quinze u vint.  
Pa num d'ocire i métrai un mien filz  
E sin avrez, ço quid, de plus gentilz.  
*Quant vus serez el palais seignurill,  
A la grant feste seint Michel del Peril,  
Mis avoez la vos sivat, ço dit.  
Enz en vos bainz que Deus pur vos i fist,  
La vuldrat il chrestiens devenir. »*

\* “He wants to [guarantee the peace] through hostages, of which you will have ten or fifteen or twenty. Despite the fact that he might be killed, I will add one of my own sons, and you won't in my view have a nobler one. *When you will be in the noble palace at the feast of Saint Michel del Peril, there my lord will follow you, so he says. In the bath that God made for you, there will he want to become Christian.*”

Note that the *GGHF* also identifies examples of FID in pre-modern France (Rabelais, Marguerite de Navarre, Scarron) without linking them to any narrative strategy.

## 2.2 Medieval Forms of FID

In Old French, there is no particular verb tense for FID, which in some instances can be expressed an assortment of tenses. Moreover, the punctuation of medieval texts operates at the discretion of the editors, and is sometimes less than ideal (Rychner 1989, 1; 1990, 200–202). Unlike the FID that we find in contemporary spoken language, the original intonation of the narrator in medieval times is inaccessible. It thus becomes essential to examine the cotext in order to determine whether the utterance in question is in FID. Bruña-Cuevas (1988) showed the importance of the cotext to identify FID in the *Lais* attributed to Marie de France. This was confirmed by my own analysis, based on a larger corpus of 22 medieval texts from different literary genres (Marnette 1996) which attempted to tease out the constants at work throughout the corpus and not just in the *Lais*. The importance of these constants cannot be stressed enough: medieval FID is not a lawless phenomenon, but rather one that requires a minimum number of characteristics in order to be appropriately interpreted. However, aside from the necessity for verb endings and pronouns to be switched to the reporting situation of enunciation, none of these characteristics are obligatory, even though the more numerous they are, the more confident one can be that this is an instance of FID. Even so, some utterances are likely to remain ambiguous. It is this very ambiguity that Flaubert and Zola made such masterful use of in their works. After all (and despite what Lips might say), what reader can

clearly distinguish between the speech of characters and that of the narrator in each sentence of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1856) or of Zola's *Les Rougon-Macquart* (1871–1893)?

As described in section 1 above, FID can continue a reported discourse but without being connected to the introductory declarative verb by subordination or coordination. In the medieval corpus, as shown in (3) below, the verb that introduces ID (underlined) is sometimes unlikely to introduce FID.

(3) *Eliduc*, ll. 725–756 (from *Lais de Marie de France* (late 12<sup>th</sup> c.))

Ele li demandot suvent,  
s'il ot oï de nule gent  
qu'ele eüst mesfet u mespris.  
tant cum il fu hors del païs ;  
*volentiers s'en esdrescera*  
*devant sa gent, quant il plaira.*  
« Dame fet il, [...] »

\*She often would ask him whether he had heard from anybody that she had misbehaved or strayed while he was away from the land; *she will defend herself publicly in front of the people, whenever it pleases him.* “Lady, he says, [...]”

In the medieval corpus, it is rare to see FID where the first main verb is in the same tense and has the same grammatical subject as the final main verb of the ID that it follows (see (4) below). Nevertheless, the first main verb of FID tends to possess at least one formal link with ID: a) it is in the same tense as the last verb of the ID (see (4) below); b) it has the same grammatical subject as this verb (see (4,7) below); c) its grammatical subject is the same as the verb introducing the ID (see (3,4,11) below). In the absence of these links, the coreference between ID and FID is provided by object pronouns, possessive adjectives or the grammatical subjects of other verbs in the FID (see (12) below). In sum, medieval FID often follows a cotext which establishes a context of reported discourse. It can have links to this cotext other than subordination and coordination (same grammatical subject, same verb tense, coreferentiality, etc.) but since FID seldom adopts all of these links, it occupies a position that is in both continuity and conflict with the cotext. When the cotext preceding the FID does not explicitly establish a discourse context, this can be a case of FID with a parenthesis: reported discourse is thus signposted within FID (see (2) above and (7) below).

The cotext following FID generally indicates separation from the reported discourse and a return to narration. In the medieval corpus, this separation can be characterized by a change in verb tense between the last main verb of the FID and the first verb of the cotext and/or by a change of grammatical subject as well as by the beginning of a new stanza in epic poetry and by closure of the DD if the FID is a message included within a character's DD (see (7) below). The most efficient means of breaking from the discourse is the use of a formula such as *Quant il l'entent, si li respunt* ('When he hears it, so he answers'). Separation can also be conveyed through a transition to action: the character who has just expressed himself then acts following this discourse. Another category involves changes of topic. Change of grammatical subject is thus but the formal indication of a more profound change: something else – another character and/or situation – is being spoken about as is the case in the following example:

(4) Beroul, *Le Roman de Tristan* (12<sup>th</sup> c.), ll. 3656-60

Il lor dit que il a toz boit :  
*Si grant arson a en son cors*  
*A poine l'en puet geter fors.*  
Tuit cil qui l'oient si parler  
De pitié prenent a plorer;

\*He tells them that he drinks to the health of them all: *There is so much burning in his body that he can barely throw it out.* All those who hear him speak so start crying out of pity. [Tristan who speaks here is lying to the crowd as he is pretending to be a leper].

While the importance of the cotext in interpreting FID is obvious, this criterion must be viewed with caution. None of the aforementioned characteristics are by themselves sufficient or even necessary (cf. Veters 1994). They allow for, but do not guarantee, the presence of FID. The more characteristics deemed conducive to FID can be found, the more likely it is that this is a case of FID. Occasionally, however, context (what is known about the characters, what they do or do not know, etc.) must be taken into consideration in order to be sure, especially in the absence of any other reported discourse in the co-text. In the following example from the *Chanson de Roland*, FID occurs because the action expressed in the future simple does not take place, as the character (Turpin) dies before he able to fulfil it:

(5) *Chanson de Roland* (late 11<sup>th</sup> c.), l. 2226

Li arcevesques, quant vit pasmer Rollant  
Dunc out tel doel unkes mais n'out si grant.  
Tendit sa main, si ad pris l'olifan.  
En Roncesvals ad un'ewe curant ;  
Aler i volt, *sin durrat a Rollant.*  
Sun petit pas s'en turnet cancelant.  
Il est si fieble qu'il ne poet en avant ;  
N'en ad vertut, trop ad perdut del sanc.  
Einz que om alast un sul arpent de camp,  
Faut li le coer, si est chaeit avant.  
La sue mort l'i vait mult angoissant.

\*The archbishop, when he sees Roland faint, then he had such sorrow, never did he feel more. He rose his hand, he has taken the horn. In Rencesvals, there is a stream of water; he wants to go there; *he will give some to Roland*. With very small steps, he turns around, staggering. He is so weak that he cannot go further. He does not have the strength to, he has lost too much blood. Before he can go any further, his heart fails him, he has fallen forward. His death is causing him great anguish.

It has been observed above that changes of verb tense help to identify FID in relation to its immediate cotext, signaling its beginning and/or its end. The use of verb tenses inside FID is also extremely relevant. A majority of verbs contained in medieval forms of FID are in the future indicative or in the present indicative (see (2,3,4,5) above and (8,9,11) below). Verbs in the imperfect indicative or related tenses (past future indicative, imperfect subjunctive) are less frequent:

(6) *Erec et Enide* (c. 1170), ll. 4935–47

Ceste novele estoit alee  
A Guivret le Petit contee,  
C'uns chevaliers d'armes navrez  
Iert morz en la forest trovez.  
O lui une dame tant bele.  
Qu'Iseut semblast estre s'ancele ;  
*Si fesoit duel mout merveillous.*  
*Trovez les avoit anbedous*  
*li cuens Oringles de Limors,*  
*s'an avoit fait porter le cors,*  
*et la dame esposer voloit,*  
*Mais ele li contredisoit.*

Quant Guivrez la parole oï, ...

\*This news had gone to Guivret the Short, that a knight wounded in a battle had been found dead in the forest, with him a lady so beautiful that Iseut would have looked like her servant; *she was showing such great sorrow. The count Oringles of Limors had found both of them, he had taken the body away and wanted to marry the lady, but she was refusing him. When Guivret heard these words, ...*

Furthermore, some FID mixes imperfect and simple past verbs with simple future or present verbs, as in the following example (see also (12) below):

(7) *Lanval*, lines 310–312 (from *Lais de Marie de France* (late 12<sup>th</sup> c.))

Mult fu dolente e curuciee  
de ceo qu'il l'out si aviliee.  
En sun lit malade culcha ;  
*ja mes, ceo dit, n'en lèvera,*  
*se li reis ne li faiseit dreit*  
*de ceo dunt ele se pleindreit.*  
Li reis fu de bois repairez, [...]

\*She was very upset and angry that he had reproached her so. She went to her bed, ill. *Never*, she says, *will she get up, unless the king would right what she would complain about.* The king had come back from the forest, [...]

The situation is very different in modern French, however, where it is the imperfect and related tenses that signal FID. The use of the present and simple future indicative tenses to mark FID in medieval texts can be easily explained.

First of all, the use of the imperfect indicative is rare in the earliest Old French texts. Fleischman (1990, 124) counts only eight examples in the Oxford version of the *Chanson de Roland* (late 11<sup>th</sup> c.). Fleischman (56) also points out that the unmarked verb tense in epic poetry (11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> c.) is the present indicative, not the simple past, as is generally the case in modern fictional narratives. It is by this means that the narrator (performer) of *chansons de geste* links the narrative to its context of utterance in a move to make it appear more vivid. By transitioning from present to past verb tenses and vice versa, medieval storytellers transported their audience directly to the action, presenting themselves and their audiences as eyewitnesses. Consequently, if the present indicative is the unmarked tense of a text, it is no surprise that future indicatives will be found in reported discourse such as ID and FID. It is only with the advent of *lais* and verse romances (12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> c.) that verbs in the imperfect indicative and the conditional become more numerous within FID, sometimes in the majority of cases. It should also be acknowledged that during this period (12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> c.), significant mutations in the use of verb tenses in narration were underway. This explains the variations that occur in medieval *lais* and romances.

The other reason why the present and simple future indicative tenses are characteristic of FID in medieval texts is that FID is found not only in the narrator's discourse, but also in characters' speech quoted in DD. This is the case particularly in *chansons de geste*, for example, when a character wants to convey a message from or to a third party (Marnette 1999). The original speaker indicated what the messenger should say to the addressee of the message, as in (8) below. The *GGHF* calls this "FID in the second person" (Marchello-Nizia et al. 2020, 1722–1723). Alternatively, the messenger can report the discourse entrusted to him in the present or in the simple future indicative (see also (2) above).

(8) *La Prise d'Orange* (late 12<sup>th</sup> c.), ll. 581-89

« [...] Il le te mande nel te devon celer,  
Que tu t'en fuies en Aufrique outre mer.  
*Ja ne verras le mois de moi passer*

Qu'il te sivra a.xx.m. ferarmez;  
 Ne te garront les tors ne li piler,  
 Les amples sales ne li parfont fossé;  
 A mous de fer te seront estroé.  
 S'il te puet prendre, a martire es livré,  
 Penduz as forches et au vent encroé.»

\* “[...] He tells/orders you this, we must not hide it from you, that you shall flee in Africa, oversea. You will not see the month of May pass by without him following you with twenty thousand of his armed men; your towers and pillars will not save you, nor the ample halls nor the deep ditches; with iron club they will be destroyed for you; if he can capture you, you will be doomed to martyrdom, hung from the gallows, fleeing in the wind.”

### 2.3 Functions and Strategies of FID in Medieval Narrative

Examples of FID in modern narratives are generally taken from impersonal (also called third-person) works of fiction, that is, texts where the narrator is not referenced in the first person. However, contrary to the opinion of some, this does not mean that the narrator is absent (Banfield 1973, 34–35) or even objective (Lips 1926, 125–126). The narrator is nevertheless reduced to a minimal role in the text and to a voice which is distinct from the characters’ voices, but more or less willingly identified with their perspective (Ehrlich 1990, 10).

It is difficult to qualify medieval texts as “impersonal narratives.” From hagiographies to verse romances, and from epic poems to *lais*, first-person references to the narrator as well as second-person references to the narratee are frequent (Marnette 1998). Even in prose narratives, which appeared later than verse ones (i.e. from 13<sup>th</sup> c. onward) and where expressions such as *Or dit li contes que* (‘Now the tale says that...’) instead of *Or conterai que* (‘Now I will recount that...’) are more frequently found, there are references to the narrator and the narratee in the first and second persons.

What, then, is the role of FID in medieval French, a device which is so commonly considered as the ultimate tool of impersonal narratives? Given the multiplicity of literary genres and their evolution over time, there is no single answer to this question. Two groups of texts, epic poetry and prose romances, appear to resist the use of FID as a result of the strategies of S&TP they adopt (Marnette 1996, 1998, 2005).

*Chansons de geste* (mainly composed between 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> c.) make considerable use of DD, which is usually unequivocally signposted, and very little use of ID. Character speech thus receives as much if not more space as storyteller speech. The aim is to deliver speech in the most “faithful” and “direct” manner possible. Moreover, character speech rarely appears alone and generally forms part of a dialogue. The absence of narrator mediation may explain why FID, like ID, is not a favored device in epic poetry. The absence of FID is thus explained by functional factors and not by medieval narrators’ ignorance or inability to differentiate between their perspective and that of the characters. The lack of FID and of ID in epic poetry is also explained by the fact that focalization in epic poetry is mainly external: the narrator plays the role of a witness, reporting the actions and direct speech of the characters from an external perspective without access to the characters’ mental discourse.

Although prose romances (13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> c.) are the closest to what one might call “impersonal narratives,” they usually contain very little FID. Cerquiglini (1981), based on thirteen examples, finds that with the rendering of Robert de Boron’s verse *Estoire du Graal* in prose, FID either disappears or becomes DD or ID. The reason for this is in Cerquiglini’s view that prose texts deliberately make explicit what the verse kept more implicit. In particular, the use of DD clarifies who the locutor is instead of keeping him/her vague because prose romances are keen to emphasise the identity of the person speaking (Cerquiglini 1981, 84).

Below is an example of FID in the original text and its transformation into DD (in bold), as identified by Cerquiglini:

(9) Robert de Boron, *Estoire du Graal* (c. 1200), ll. 631–638 (quoted by Cerquiglini 1984, 99)

E cil qui l'avoient gardé  
Disoient bien par vérité  
Qu'il n'estoit pas la u on le mist.  
Encor unt il plus grant despist,  
Car il l'unt par Joseph perdu.  
De ce sunt il tout esperdu ;  
*Et se damages y a nus,*  
*Ç'a il fait, et Nychodemus.*

\*And those who had guarded him were saying by truth that he was not where he had been placed. And they are even more annoyed because they have lost him due to Joseph. Because of this, this they are quite distraught. *And if there is any damage coming from this, that is his fault, and Nichodemus.*

(10) Prose version of the *Estoire du Graal* (early 13<sup>th</sup> c.) (quoted by Cerquiglini 1984, 99)

Et cil parolent qui le gardoient et dient que il sevent bien que il n'est mie la u Joseph l'avoit mis,  
et dient que « par lui l'avons nous perdu et se maus nous en vient, ce nous ara il fait entre lui et Nichodemus »

\*And those who were guarding him speak and say that they know well that he is not where Joseph had placed him, and they say that “because of him [Joseph] we have lost him and if any harm comes to us from this, this will be his and Nichodemus’ doing.”

A study of larger corpora of medieval prose romances confirms Cerquiglini’s observations as to the speaker’s identity (Marnette 1998, 2005). Here, unlike in epic poetry and verse romances, DD rarely appears without being introduced by a *verbum dicendi*. Moreover, each prose romance privileges one type of introduction over the rest, whereas verse romances exhibit no real preferences in this regard. A pattern is thus established in the prose text: every speaker of DD must be identified as consistently as possible. The narration itself is predicated on this need for identification, with formulae such as *Le conte dit que* recurring many times over. The reason for which FID – where real effort is required to determine who is speaking or thinking – is underused in prose romances is now clear.

As with modern FID, the medieval use of FID cannot be associated with one unique function or specific meaning. Though it may be useful to group texts by genre, the risk of simplifying the issue cannot be ignored. The Oxford version of the *Chanson de Roland*, for instance, contains more examples of FID than other epics, and it reveals various types, if one includes examples of FID inserted in the characters’ discourse (see (2) above and (11) below). Likewise, there is a real variation in the proportion and type (speech/thought) of FID present in the various *Lais*, including both those attributed to Marie de France and others (Marnette 2013). In my own research, I have tried to elucidate some of the functions played by FID while relating them to specific types (i.e., speech or thought).

*Chansons de geste* are generally described as having an external focalization from without. The narrator plays the role of a witness, reporting the actions and direct speech of the characters from an external perspective and without granting access to their reflections. Characters’ feelings must thus be ascertained by their reactions or by their utterances. This practice explains why FID is so rare in these texts, albeit not completely unknown in narrator discourse (see (5), above).

The situation changes in *lais* and romances, where the narrator more readily communicates the reflections of the characters and tends to focus on the psychological evolution of their amorous feelings. Here, focalization is predominantly external from within: it is rare for events to be recounted solely through the characters’ eyes, and the narrator always provides more information than the characters have at their disposal. However, contrary to what one might expect, characters’ thoughts are not often the subject of reported discourse, be it in ID or in FID. The narrator describes feelings and reflections but does not impart characters’

mental discourse as easily as he does their spoken discourse. In fact, in romances, mental discourse is often presented as spoken discourse. For example, in Chrétien de Troyes's romances *Erec et Enide* (c. 1170) and *Yvain* (c. 1180) Enide and Laudine engage in debates with themselves out loud. The verb *dire* is used instead of *penser*, and we only occasionally find *dire en soi même* ("to say within oneself"). *Lais* employ a higher proportion of FID to express thought than romances, especially the *Lais* attributed to Marie de France (Marnette 2013). In general, however, medieval narrators rarely use FID to report thoughts: they prefer either ID or description, giving them more control over discourse (in the broad sense), or, at the other extreme, they dress up thought as speech. In this way, medieval FID differs greatly from FID in modern narratives, where it is very commonly used to express characters' thoughts.

FID reporting speech (FID/speech) is more frequent than FID reporting thoughts in medieval French literature although proportions speech and thought are distributed differently depending on the text. This type of FID is the most clearly marked, since few instances are not preceded by a cotext which establishes a discourse context or is followed by a formula indicating the end of the FID.

Taken as a whole, *lais*, which tend to be courtly love verse narratives (12<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> c.) make more use of FID than *fabliaux*, which are short comic verse tales of relatively equal length (13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> c.) (Marnette 2013). Overall, *lais* also contain less DD in comparison to narration. It would seem, then, that the narrators of *lais* tend to prefer narration, wherein character speech in FID and ID are included. In thus placing character speech under their control, the narrators of *lais* tend to play a very different role to that of the narrator/witness in *chansons de geste*. They filter and "transcribe" the characters' discourses with their own words, just as they purport to transcribe the original Breton *lais* into their own language with their own structure.

As noted above, some FID/speech is included in a character's DD and forms part of a message that has either been reported or remains to be delivered. Of these examples, a majority follow ID or the narration of a speech act. Here, FID (like ID) is used for reasons of intelligibility: one direct discourse contained in another would risk confusion between two possible *je*, that of the reported clause and that of the reporting clause. This is possible only in monologues that constitute a secondary narrative within the main text, such as the character Calogrenant's account with which Chrétien de Troyes's *Yvain, le chevalier au lion* begins (around 500 lines). FID thus alternates with ID for reasons of intelligibility and fluidity in messages. FID avoids the ponderousness of a repeated *verbum dicendi*, but ID is sometimes necessary in order to clearly restate who is speaking. In one particular instance taken from the *Chanson de Roland*, FID is used where ID would provide excessive clarity:

(11) *Chanson de Roland* (late 11<sup>th</sup> c.), ll. 472–480

Si li ad dit : « A tort vos curuciez,  
 Quar ço vos mandet Caries, ki France tient,  
Que recevez la lei de chrestiens ;  
*Demi Espaigne vus durat ill en fiez.*  
*L'altre meitet avrat Rollant, sis niés*  
*Mult orguillos parçuner i avrez !*  
*Si ceste acorde ne volez otrier,*  
*En Sarraguce vus vendrat aseger ;*  
*Par poëstet serez pris e liez,*  
*Menet serez dreit a Ais le siet.*  
*Vus n'i avrez palefreid ne destrer,*  
*Ne mul ne mule que puissez chevalcher ;*  
*Getet serez sur un malvais sumer.*  
*Par jugement iloec perdrez le chef.*  
 Nostre emperere vus enveiet cest bref. »

\*He [Ganelon] said to him [Marsile]: « You are wrong to get angry, because Charles who holds France sends for you to receive the Christian law; he will give you half of Spain in fief. As for the other half, his nephew Roland will have it. You will have quite a proud partner! If you don't agree to this, he will come to besiege you in Sarragoce; you will be made captured and bound by force. You will be led to the city of Aix,. You won't have a palfrey or a war horse, nor a mule to ride; you'll be thrown on a bad pack horse. By trial, there, you will lose your head. This is the message our emperor has sent you.

Rychner (1990, 213) considers this not as an example of FID but as Ganelon's discourse. However, the contents of Ganelon's traitorous and threatening message would have no weight if he did not present his speech as a reproduction of Charlemagne's (which in fact it is not). Nevertheless, and in refraining from repeating the *ço vos mandet Carles* introduction, Ganelon appears to have misgivings, as when he later speaks ill of Roland while refusing to do so about Charlemagne. In truth, the only line that Charlemagne probably did say forms part of the ID (*Que recevez la lei de chrestiens*).

FID can also report a written discourse. In Bérout's *Tristan*, the couple's message to King Mark is first orally composed by Tristan, and the hermit then summarizes King Mark's written response aloud. These varied interventions are reported by FID in characters' DD. FID/written also involves the well-known issue of the stick on which Tristan engraves a message for Iseult in *Chèvrefeuille*, one of the *lais* attributed to Marie de France. Here, there is no human intermediary to deliver the message: FID is used, preceded by ID and followed, in this instance, by DD:

(12) *Chèvrefeuille*, ll. 61–79 (from *Lais de Marie de France* (late 12<sup>th</sup> c.)

Ceo fu la sume de l'escrit  
 qu'il li aveit mandé e dit,  
que lunges ot ilec esté  
e atendu e surjurné  
pur espiër e pur saveir  
coment il la peüst veoir  
kar ne poeit vivre senz li.  
*Dels dous fu il tut altres*  
*cume del chievrefueil esteit*  
*ki a la coldre se prenoit :*  
*quant il s'i est lacies e pris*  
*e tut entur le fust s'est mis,*  
*ensemble poeent bien durer ;*  
*mes ki puis les vuelt desevrer,*  
*la coldre muert hastivement*  
*e li chievrefueilz ensement.*

« Bele amie, si est de nus  
 ne vus senz mei ne jeo senz vus ! »  
 La reïne vint chevalchant.

\*This was the sum of the written word that he had sent for her and said, that for a long time he had stayed there and waited and sojourned in order to spy and to learn how he could see her because he could not live without her. With the two of them, it was like it was for the honeysuckle which attached itself to the hazeltree: once it has laced and clasped itself to it and it has gone all around the trunk, together they can last long; but whoever then tries to separate them, the hazeltree dies straight away and so does the honeysuckle soon thereafter. "Fair friend, so it is for us: ne you without me nor I without you."

In example (12), DD is more of a motto characterizing Tristan and Iseult's love than a true description of it, as in the FID that precedes. In this type of situation, FID fulfils the role of

intermediary, which would usually belong to a human character. It retains the fluidity of DD but also demonstrates the “non-direct” nature of written messages generally, given that the recipient must decipher the sender’s speech through a written medium.

It is not the intention of the above analysis to argue that FID appears with high frequency in medieval texts, or that all instances of FID that have been identified cannot be contested. It simply reveals that FID, *in the same way* as DD and ID, is a tool at the medieval narrator’s disposal for representing the speech and thoughts of his characters. Although ambiguity and polyvalence are among its essential features, it most assuredly presents a series of formal regularities that grant it a “well-oiled” system of identification. It exists because of and in relation to its surrounding cotexts and context. The narrator can employ this tool to various ends depending on the type of FID (speech/thought) and on the type of text in question. The presence or absence of FID in a text tells us about the degree of control the narrator holds over the characters’ speech and thoughts and about the different perspectives (focalization) to which the reader has access. Refusing to take notice of FID in medieval narratives due to a few specious arguments or to an overly restrictive a formal definition is to deprive oneself of a major variable in the study of the diverse narrative strategies at work in medieval texts.

### 3 FID in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-century French Literature

It is fair to say that FID flourished in nineteenth-century literature because it was intimately linked to a specific genre: the modern novel told in the past and in the third person with an impersonal narrative voice, as exemplified in Flaubert, Maupassant, Zola, etc. and their British counterparts, Austen and James (and later Lawrence, Woolf, etc.). However, the eclecticism of this list vindicates my point that FID has many different functions and is employed for very different strategies (Marnette 2005, 226–240). Flaubert; does not use FID for the same reasons as Zola. What makes their strategies very different is Flaubert’s use of FID/thought as opposed to Zola’s predilection for FID/speech, as shown in the two examples below:

(12) Flaubert, *L’Education sentimentale* (1869), part II, chap. II

Frédéric était resté seul. Il pensait à ses amis, et sentait entre eux et lui comme un grand fossé plein d’ombre qui les séparait. *Il leur avait tendu la main cependant, et ils n’avaient pas répondu à la franchise de son cœur.* Il se rappela les mots de Pellerin et de Dussardier sur Arnoux. *C’était une invention, une calomnie sans doute? Mais pourquoi?* Et il aperçut Mme Arnoux ruinée, pleurant, vendant ses meubles. Cette idée le tourmenta toute la nuit.

Frédéric was left on his own. Thinking about his friends, he felt as if there were a great dark gulf separating them from him. *Yet he had held out his hand to them; it was they who had failed to respond to his generous gesture.*

He remembered what Pellerin and Dussardier had said about Arnoux. *It was probably a slanderous fabrication. Or was it?* He imagined Madame Arnoux ruined, in tears, selling her furniture. This idea tormented him all night. (Tr. Robert Baldick)

(13) Zola, *Son excellence Eugène Rougon* (1876)

Nulle part, ni en Angleterre, ni en Allemagne, ni en Espagne, ni en Italie, elle n’avait vu des bals plus étourdissants, des galas plus prodigieux. *Aussi, disait-elle avec sa face tout allumée d’admiration, son choix était fait, maintenant : elle voulait être française.*

\*Nowhere, not in England, not in Germany, not in Spain, not in Italy, had she seen such breathtaking balls, more prodigious galas. *Therefore, she was saying, with her face all illuminated with admiration, her choice was made, now: she wanted to become French.* (emphasis added)

In his prolific series *Les Rougon-Macquart: Histoire naturelle et sociale d'une famille sous le second empire*, Zola aims at coloring the narration with his characters' vocabulary and cheek rather than using it as a vehicle for their thoughts and inner perceptions. By using FID/speech instead of DD/speech, he appears to tighten his grip on his characters' discourse while retaining the vivacity and realism peculiar to the direct mode. The "truth" or verisimilitude of his technique resides in the coloring of the narrative through free indirect speech and thus in rendering how realistically characters speak (especially working-class characters). It does not lie in the rendition of how characters actually think. This is probably why Zola prefers FID/speech to FID/thought. Moreover, this trend toward a *parler vrai* ('true speech'), pervades the narration itself so that the vocabulary used in the reported discourses is often found in the very discourse of the narrator, a technique often described as "contamination" by scholars.

Flaubert, by contrast, tends to relinquish some of his control by "freeing" the thoughts of his characters – more so for Frédéric Moreau in *L'Education sentimentale* than for Emma Bovary in *Madame Bovary*. Emma's thoughts are often rendered in FID/thought, but as noted by many scholars, it is sometimes difficult to differentiate between her romantic thoughts and Flaubert's ironic rendition of her musings, and this double-voicedness can create ambiguity. In some cases, the sophisticated words and ideas used by Flaubert's narrator seem impossible for Emma Bovary to conceive as such. In other cases, it is not clear whether the narrator is describing her state of mind or reporting what she thinks her feelings are. Consequently, one is left with the impression that the narrator/enunciator is somewhat overtaking the character/enunciator. Both in *Madame Bovary* and in *L'Education sentimentale*, Flaubert focuses on specific individuals (Frédéric Moreau, Emma Bovary) such that only rarely is the reader not in the presence of the main character or sees things from another character's perspective. This means that most events (actions and utterances) are seen through either the narrator's perspective or that of the main character. Either the narrator describes these thoughts (narrated thoughts and more generally psycho-narration, direct and indirect thoughts, both marking external focalization from within) or he allows access to their thoughts "freely, without these utterances being dependent on a *verbum sentiendi* (FID/thought and very rarely free direct thought, marked by internal focalization).

Experimentation with S&TP strategies (especially those employing Free Direct Discourse (FDD) and FID) as well as with tenses were key to the evolution of the twentieth-century novel. Many writers sought, implicitly or explicitly, to break with the traditional unity of narrative voice and thus with the homogeneity of specific markers such as tenses and reported discourses. Also defied were neat classifications into third-person and first-person narratives and the dominance of the narrator-focalizer over the character-focalizer. Twentieth-century writers combined changes in tenses and S&TP to create innovative narratives where the concept of "narrator" (or "narrative voice") took on a very different meaning.

With regard to tenses, these changes resulted in relinquishing the canonic use of the past tenses (simple past and imperfect) to refer to story events. Some authors chose to use the present tense only or to alternate between the present tense and the past tenses from paragraph to paragraph, thereby maintaining a certain level of overall homogeneity. Others went further and mixed present tenses (present and present perfect) and past tenses (simple past and imperfect) within the same chunks of text in a way that is reminiscent of oral language and medieval texts, as André Gide did, for example, in *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* (1925). As a consequence, there occurs a certain blurring between the time of the narration and the time of the story events that results in ambiguous forms of point of view, particularly in first-person narration but also in third-person narration as can be seen in the following example, where the difficulty of differentiating between the narrator's comments and the characters' discourse does not exist only at the level of focalisation (who perceives what, e.g. the bell ringing) but also at the level of discourse (who says/thinks what):

(14) Gide, *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*, p 29

Monsieur Profitendieu prend le cahier, mais il souffre trop. Il repousse doucement l'enfant:

**“Plus tard. On va dîner. Charles est-il rentré?**

- **Il est descendu à son cabinet.** (C’est au rez-de-chaussée que l’avocat reçoit sa clientèle).

- **Va lui dire qu’il vienne me trouver. Va vite.”**

Un coup de sonnette! Madame Profitendieu rentre enfin, elle s’excuse d’être en retard; *elle a dû faire beaucoup de visites*. Elle s’attriste de trouver son mari souffrant. *Que peut-on faire pour lui? C’est vrai qu’il a très mauvaise mine. - il ne pourra manger. Qu’on se mette à table sans lui. Mais qu’après le repas elle vienne le retrouver avec les enfants.* - **Bernard?** - **Ah! C’est vrai; son ami ... tu sais bien, celui avec qui il prenait des répétitions de mathématiques, est venu l’emmener dîner.**

Profitendieu se sentait mieux. Il avait d’abord eu peur d’être trop souffrant pour pouvoir parler.

\*Monsieur Profitendieu takes the copy-book, but he is in too much pain. He gently pushes the child away.

- **Later on. It’s just dinner time. Has Charles come in?**

- **He went down to his consulting room.** (the barristers receives his clients in a room on the ground floor.)

- **Go and tell him I want to speak to him. Quick!”**

A ring at the door bell! Madame Profitendieu at last! She apologizes for being late. She had a great many visits to pay. She is sorry to see her husband so poorly. *What can be done for him? He certainly looks very unwell. - He won’t be able to eat anything. They must sit down without him, but after dinner will she come to his study with the children?* - **Bernard?** - **Oh, yes; his friend... you know, the one he is reading mathematics with, came and took him out to dinner.**

Profitendieu felt better. He had at first been afraid he would be too ill to speak.

Such alternations of tense also enabled authors to play on the continuum and ambiguities allowed by FDD and FID in the present, thereby challenging any neat pigeon-holing into categories (DD, ID, FID) or types (speech versus thought/attitude). Also called into question is the clear embedding of characters’ voices in the narrator’s discourse.

As shown in Marnette (2005, 240–282), twentieth-century authors such as Gide, Céline, Aragon, Queneau, Sarraute, and many others spearheaded innovative narrative strategies involving alternations of tense and creative uses of reported discourse. Their strategies for S&TP, stemming in particular from the play on continuum and the ambiguities made possible by the use of FID in the present and of FDD, brought about some or all of the following consequences:

- 1) Character discourse is put on the same level as narrator discourse with no salient distinction between levels (use of the same tense, lack of typographical signaling, absence of *verbum dicendi/sentiendi*, same colloquial style), thus calling into question the independence and consistency of the narrative voice as well as the distinction between external and internal focalization.
- 2) The absence of *verbum dicendi/sentiendi* blurs the distinction between speech and thought, thus opening the way to a subtler continuum going from external speech to interior monologue or even to pre-reflexive perceptions. In some novels (Céline, Sarraute), what characters say is infinitely less important than what they think and feel.
- 3) It is also more difficult to know which character is speaking/thinking, so that some narratives become continuous texts full of voices lacking in individuality.
- 4) These ambiguities elicit more interpretative work (and thus more freedom) on the part of the reader, who is to some degree left to his own devices by the author/narrator.

Clearly, in many twentieth-century texts, discourse (speech, thought) takes on a greater importance than action. This is linked to complex attitudes held by writers toward reality and toward prose fiction. On the one hand, the oralization and theatricalization of language at work

in some texts (consider, for instance, the massive use of DD and the presence of colloquialisms in Queneau and Céline) would seem to take us closer to Zola's *parler vrai* ('authentic speech'). At the same time, one is left with the feeling that reality is only the sum of what registers on different consciences, that it is not linear and unique, reigned over by an omniscient narrator, but rather must be reconstructed by the reader from the intricate interplay of characters' and the narrator's discourses. There is the additional *caveat* that what appears on the surface – speech – is inherently empty and useless because it is tainted by ideological structures and because, as Baxtin (1986 [1979], 92) notes 'each utterance is filled with echoes and reverberations of other utterances', i.e. with what has been said or thought before by someone else. The paradox is that discourse, be it that of the characters or that of the narrator, cannot be trusted even though it is the only way to reach reality.

#### 4 Conclusion

Whether in the Middle Ages or in the twentieth century, narrators have exploited different attributes of FID, and more freely so, than in the nineteenth century's FID 'golden age.' At all times however, it is clear that FID, like DD and ID, has been a crucial tool for narrators to modulate their hold on their characters' discourse and to alternate the various perspectives which their readers could access (focalization). Because FID results from the combination of techniques (DD and ID) and voices (speaker and enunciator[s]), it is inherently "mixed", which can allow for some ambiguity, but it is important to understand that even medieval FID, despite its relative formal freedom, presented linguistic regularities and could be identified both through its context and its co-text.

As seen above, it would appear that medieval texts while using FID relatively little compared to modern ones, also favoured FID/speech over FID/thought, which can possibly be linked to their general preference for external focalization. Overall therefore, medieval FID while formally freer might be said to be used for relatively fewer functions (even though none of them were excluded). Modern FID, on the other hand, while formally more restricted, was deployed in relatively more functions, depending on the authors' choices to focus more on their characters' speech or thought (e.g. Zola vs Flaubert) or to sometimes jettison the distinction of speech and thought altogether while experimenting with innovative narrative strategies as we have seen for some twentieth-century authors.

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