Stylistics: mind style in an autobiographical account of schizophrenia

Zsófia Demjén, *University College London*, and Elena Semino, *Lancaster University*

1.   Introduction

At the best of times it is difficult to imagine what life is like for someone else – to put yourself in another's shoes. This becomes harder the more other people's experiences differ from our own. So how do we even begin to understand what it is like to have perceptions, beliefs and experiences that no one else shares; to see, hear and believe things that others do not? Personal accounts are among the few resources we have for getting 'a genuine feel for' or 'a visceral awareness of' what it must be like for others, including, in our case, people diagnosed with schizophrenia. *Henry's Demons (2011)*, a family autobiography that is the subject of our discussions in this chapter, was written specifically with the intention of 'making schizophrenia and mental illness less of a mystery' (p. xiii)[1].

Henry Cockburn, diagnosed with schizophrenia in 2002 at the age of 20, and his father, Patrick, wrote their 'story of living with schizophrenia' during Henry's recovery in 2008. *Henry's Demons* (HD) is co-authored, but individual chapters are attributed to individual authors. Of 17 chapters, the majority are narrated by Patrick; Jan Montefiore, Henry's mother, contributes entries from her journal to one; and Henry narrates five and a half. As Patrick puts it: 'The mental world in which [Henry] had been living was so different from my own that his firsthand testimony alone could convey what it is like to hear voices and see visions […] Only Henry himself could describe the landscape of this hidden planet on which he lived' (p. xiv). The following is an example of how Henry does this (we will return to this excerpt in Section 3):

Excerpt 1

> *(1) I found myself walking on a road parallel to the train tracks. (2) I felt I was going on a mission. (3) You know fire hydrants are yellow and have an H on them. (4) I thought the H stood for Henry. (5) I climbed a barbed-wire fence and sat under a big tree. (6) I put down all the stuff I had amassed: bits of metal, bits of wood, and a big bag of clay. (7) I felt the tree telling me to take off my shoes. (8) I was scared, as I had been arrested previously for not wearing shoes. (9) I climbed over another barbed-wire fence and found myself in the undergrowth beside the railway track. (10) A train went past and I was in full view. (11) I found my way under the root of a tree and could feel it talking to me in my head.* (pp. 39-40; our numbering)

Henry's sections of the book are distinctive, even among other autobiographies of mental illness, in their temporal proximity to the most severe phase of his psychosis. The book was written before Henry could be described as 'well', making Henry particularly well-placed to write 'from the *inside*' (p. xiii). Indeed, this immediate inside view seems to achieve the goal of allowing people to put themselves in Henry's shoes. Unusually for an autobiography, HD has been reviewed in several medical journals: *The Lancet, Psychosis, The American Journal of Psychiatry* and the *British Journal of Psychiatry*, with lay and expert reviewers

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[1] We will use page numbers only for all text references to *Henry's Demons* (Cockburn and Cockburn, 2011).

commenting on how much the book has enabled readers to empathize with Henry. As one reviewer on Amazon.co.uk comments 'you can't help but to live the hallucinations with him' (https://amzn.to/2EpvDP1).

Our objective in this chapter is to uncover the linguistic characteristics of this 'inside view' by exploiting the stylistic concept of 'mind style'. In Stylistics, a branch of Linguistics interested in how linguistic patterns in (primarily literary) texts contribute to readers' possible interpretations (Jeffries and McIntyre, 2010), 'mind style' is the concept used to capture how distinctive linguistic patterns can contribute to portray distinctive minds. It is defined as 'any distinctive linguistic representation of an individual mental self' and 'an impression of a world-view', resulting from the cumulative effect of 'consistent structural options' in texts (Fowler, 1977: 103, 76). This notion relies on the more general notion of style in language as the result of characteristic patterns of linguistic choices, and is usually applied to fictional narratives that foreground the mental functioning and world view of a character or narrator, such as Bromden in Ken Kesey's *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*, who is a patient in a mental hospital (Semino and Swindlehurst, 1996).

Rather than examining a literary text, in what follows, we focus in particular on patterns, or 'structural options', of pronoun use, narrative style, visual focus and the (lack of) representation of others' minds in Henry's chapters in HD. In this way, we explore Henry's individual 'mental world' through his use of language, in pursuit of a deeper understanding of his lived experience. This is important because the lived experience, or phenomenology, of mental illness, and especially psychosis and related disorders, is still poorly understood (2013), and carries considerable stigma. From a clinical perspective, better understanding what an illness feels like minimally contributes to increased empathy, including on the part of clinicians, which in itself is important for effective healthcare (DasGupta and Charon, 2004). While we link some of the textual patterns to 'symptoms' associated with schizophrenia diagnoses, our object of analysis is *Henry's* individual mind style. We show how a stylistics approach can, on the one hand, shed further light on the lived experience of psychosis, and, on the other hand, add nuance to or question existing descriptions of and diagnostic criteria for schizophrenia.

2. Background to mind style

The term 'mind style' was intended to capture the phenomenon whereby linguistic choices and patterns in a fictional narrative make it possible for the reader to experience a mind that works in a way that is perceived to be different from what may be regarded as 'normal' (Fowler 1977).

Leech and Short (1981: 150) later defined mind style as 'how [the fictional world] is apprehended, or conceptualised', and make an important contribution to the development of the concept by proposing a cline from 'natural and uncontrived' mind styles at one end, 'to those which clearly impose an unorthodox conception of the fictional world' at the other end (Leech and Short, 1981: 151). One end of the cline is exemplified via 'normal' authorial mind styles such as the implied author's in Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, and the other end via a detailed analysis of an extract from the section of William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* that is narrated by Benjy Compson. Leech and Short (1981: 162-66) focus particularly on an extract in which Benjy's use of lexis, syntactic structures and cohesive relationships makes it difficult, at least initially, to understand that he is describing a game of golf, and leads to the inference that he does not fully understand what he is watching (e.g. 'Through the fence, between the curling flower spaces, I could see them hitting'). More generally, Leech and Short show how, in principle, any text can be analysed from the perspective of mind style, but, in practice, this is particularly relevant and productive when the language used in a text suggests a mind that is in some way unusual or distinctive, even though not necessarily resulting in the challenges to comprehension posed by Benjy's perspective.

The Stylistics literature on mind style since the 1980s has adopted different theoretical perspectives to reveal how a range of linguistic phenomena can contribute to create the impression of distinctive mind styles, or more precisely, to establish a connection between linguistic choices on the one hand and mental processes and world views on the other. Halliday (1971) and Fowler (1977, 1996) use Systemic Functional Grammar to reveal the contribution of patterns of lexis and transitivity to the creation of world views (see also Bockting, 1995; Hoover, 1999). More recently, Langacker's (2008) Cognitive Grammar has been applied to define mind

style in terms of the notion of 'construal' and to reveal how mind styles can be conveyed via phenomena such as 'focusing', 'reference points' and 'specificity', for example in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let me Go* (Nuttall, 2018) and Paula Hawkins' *The Girl on the Train* (Giovanelli, 2018). Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory has been used to explain how idiosyncratic patterns in the use of linguistic metaphors may suggest unusual world views, as in the case of Machine metaphors and the mind style of Bromden in Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Semino and Swidlehurst, 1996; see also Semino, 2002; Nuttall, 2018). And frameworks from Conversation Analysis and Pragmatics have been applied to show how mind styles can be inferred from the ways in which characters interact with other characters, as in the case of the protagonist of Mark Haddon's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, who is usually interpreted as having an autism-spectrum disorder (Semino, 2014a and b). While most studies involve the detailed qualitative analysis of extracts from novels, quantification is often used to support claims about distinctive patterns, including by means of corpus linguistic methods (e.g. Semino, 2014a; McIntyre and Archer, 2010; Stockwell and Mahlberg, 2015).

The linguistic phenomena that are highlighted from these different theoretical and analytical perspectives overlap, to some extent, with those identified in psychology and psychiatry as indicators of individuality and pathology (e.g. Pennebaker and King, 1999; Pennebaker et al., 2003). Indeed, while the characters who have been analysed from the perspective of mind style in fiction include such different character types as children and angels (e.g. Gregoriou, 2014), a substantial minority are described or interpreted as having some kind of developmental problem (e.g. Semino, 2014b) or mental health issue (e.g. Bockting, 1995; Semino and Swindlehurst, 1996). These analyses are often informed by and made relevant to 'real-life' understandings of the relevant conditions. In contrast, the notion of mind style has only rarely been applied to non-fictional autobiographical narratives such as HD. One such example is Demjén's (2015) analysis of Sylvia Plath's first journal in *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath* (Kukil, 2001). Similarly to the approach we describe here, Demjén's (2015) examination of Plath's mind style brings together knowledge of Plath's particular linguistic creativity and her diagnosed depression with quantitative and qualitative analysis of the linguistic patterns in her journal.

Overall, there are both advantages and potential pitfalls in the study of mind style in narratives generally, and, more specifically, narratives involving some kind of condition or illness. From the point of view of stylistic analysis, mind style captures an important aspect of the experience of reading narratives, and is a useful umbrella term for the variety of relationships between linguistic patterns and possible perceptions of minds that can be encountered in different texts. However, the study of mind style often depends on interpreting characters as having a cognitive limitation or a mental illness (see Bockting, 1995), and relies on the controversial and fuzzy boundary between what may be described as 'normal' and its opposite(s). From the perspective of Stylistics, and literary studies more generally, terms such as 'unusual', 'unorthodox' and even 'deviant' are linked to highly valued aesthetic effects. However, all these terms also have negative evaluative and ideological implications that potentially set up problematic distinctions between a 'normal' ideal reader and a non-normal character, which are particularly inappropriate when real people rather than fictional characters are concerned. Having said that, studies of mind style often discuss the potential for empathy that results from being exposed, *from the inside*, to minds that may be perceived as 'different' or 'other', as Patrick also comments with reference to Henry's writing (p. xiii). In some cases, stylisticians explicitly point out the insights that may result from experiencing a fictional world through a very different mind, including for questioning the boundary between 'normal' and 'not-normal'. For example, Leech and Short (2981: 166) describe Benjy's mind style as 'primitive' but add that, '[w]ith its childlike vision, such language borders on poetry in recapturing a pristine awareness of things'. Similarly, Margolin (2003: 278) comments on how the fictional presentation of the 'breakdown and failure' of cognitive mechanisms 'is itself a powerful cognitive tool which may make us aware of actual cognitive mechanisms, and, more specifically, of our own mental functioning'.

It is with full awareness of both the strengths and weaknesses of the concept of mind style that we apply it to Henry's chapters from HD in the rest of this chapter.

3.   Mind style in Henry's Demons

In this section, we explore Henry's mind style by focusing on how he relates the experiences that led to him being diagnosed with schizophrenia and detained in hospital under Section 3 of the UK Mental Health Act 1983.

3.1   A note on method

In principle, almost any linguistic aspect of a text can be indicative of mind style. The challenge for the analyst, therefore, is to identify in an explicit and rigorous manner any linguistic features that are distinctive and systematic within the relevant text, and make a case for their potential contribution to readers' impressions of the mental processes and world view of the relevant character or narrator. Building on the literature on mind style, we employed both quantitative and qualitative approaches in our analysis.

The qualitative analysis involved focusing on aspects of Henry's narration that have been previously found to be relevant to mind style (e.g. lexical choices, negation, deictic expressions, interactional behaviour) and/or that stood out against the findings of previous studies of similar texts or textual phenomena (e.g. tellability and sequencing in story-telling). The quantitative analysis involved using corpus linguistic software (Wmatrix, Rayson, 2009), to compare Henry's five and a half chapters (17,445 words of text) to a 40,000-word reference corpus of late 20th century autobiographies. This enabled us to establish the distinctive lexical features of Henry's narrative, i.e. what words and semantic domains (i.e. areas of meaning) are 'overused' or 'underused' to a statistically significant extent[2] in Henry's chapters as compared with the larger corpus of autobiographies. The statistically overused items are known in Corpus Linguistics as 'key', or, more specifically in our case, 'keywords' and 'key semantic domains' (see Hunt (this volume) for further discussion of methods of corpus analysis).

By combining these qualitative and quantitative approaches, we identified a number of features of Henry's narrative that can be described as distinctive, shown to occur systematically, and argued to contribute to the perception of his individual mind style.

3.2   Analysis

Henry's Demons traces Henry's and his family's experience from his first psychotic episode through several such attacks, diagnosis, hospitalizations and several escapes from and returns to mental institutions, and then, arguably, a certain amount of progress towards the end. Henry's narrative style is striking for what Patrick describes as 'a radiant simplicity and truthfulness about his actions' (p. xv) as in Excerpt 1 above from Henry's first chapter in the book. This short excerpt displays a number of distinctive features that, as we show in the course of the analysis, are characteristic of Henry's writing. At this point in the story, Henry is in Brighton at university and is supposed to be meeting Jan and Alex, his mother and brother, for lunch at his residence. Before the two arrive, Henry has the idea to make a drum for Alex and leaves to pick up supplies to do so.

Some of the claims that Henry makes in Excerpt 1 correspond to what are normally viewed as symptoms of mental illness, and schizophrenia more specifically. This applies to hearing the voices of trees (sentences 7 and 11), i.e. experiencing Auditory Verbal Hallucinations, and the 'over-interpretation' (Bergamin, 2018) of the H on a fire hydrant as a reference to himself (sentence 4) . In all three cases, Henry also uses verbs to do with his own subjectivity to emphasize how those experiences are mediated through his mind and senses: the use of 'thought' in sentence 4 attributes the statement about the meaningfulness of the 'H' to his past self, and undermines its factivity; and the use of the verb 'feel' to precede two verbs relating to speech in sentences 7 and 11 is linguistically marked, and suggests that the communication that Henry perceives as coming from the trees is not straightforwardly auditory (see Demjén and Semino, 2015).

More generally, nine of the 11 sentences that make up the extract begin with the first-person singular pronoun 'I'. The verbs for which 'I' functions as subject alternate between references to physical actions (e.g.

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[2] We used the Log-likelihood statistic to establish statistical significance at the level of p>0.0001 (LL=10). We also used Log Ratio as a measure of effect size, to establish the strength of the observed differences.

'climbed', 'put down'), and, as we have already mentioned, references to internal processes (e.g. 'thought', 'felt'). The opening of sentence 1 ('I found myself walking') falls between these two broad categories: it refers to a physical action ('walking'), but does so via a metaphorical use of the verb 'find' that suggests Henry's surprise, or a sense of diminished agency/responsibility, for the fact that he was walking on that particular road at that time.

The sequence of internal and external experiences mentioned in the extract can be assumed to reflect a chronological order, so that the extract functions as a 'story'[3] relating to one particular episode in Henry's life. However, no temporal or causal markers are used to point out explicitly the connections between the experiences captured by the different sentences. In several cases, connections can be inferred through the presence of anaphoric reference (e.g. 'the tree' following 'a big tree') or lexical cohesion (e.g. 'a train' following 'the railway track'). In other cases, connections are more tenuous. The reference to the fire hydrant, for example, reads like a brief informal digression with a direct appeal to the reader ('You know …'), but without a clear reference to the presence of a fire hydrant at the time. In sentence 6, it is not entirely clear whether the objects that Henry had been carrying with him are mentioned because they are all relevant to the building of the drum. And sentence 8 states a causal connection between not wearing shoes and a previous arrest that seems implausible, as not wearing shoes is not a criminal offence. However, Henry had previously been arrested *while* not wearing shoes, which may have led him to make that connection. More broadly, Henry focuses on his immediate surroundings and in-the-moment feelings, but does not mention any concerns about how others might be reacting to his absence (he later says that, when he got back, his mother was 'furious' with him 'for being three hours late', p. 40).

Overall, the distinctive features of this brief extract, which are representative of Henry's general style, all have the potential to contribute to the perception of the workings of his mind, and an appreciation of what it is like to be him, as an individual. Some of these features can also be related to symptoms of mental illness, and all can contribute to an understanding of what it is like to experience such illness. Before coming to any conclusions, however, we will provide more detail and evidence for the features that we have mentioned so far, as well as for some additional but related characteristics of Henry's chapters.

Pronouns

We noted above that nine of the 11 sentences that make up Excerpt 1 begin with the first-person singular pronoun 'I'. An unusually frequent use of 'I' is in fact a key feature of Henry's style. Table 1 shows the personal pronouns that are statistically significantly overused or underused (marked by negative Log-likelihood and Log Ratio values) in Henry's sections of the book when compared to a corpus of extracts from late 20th century autobiographies. The table is sorted by the Log Ratio score and shows a significantly higher relative frequency of 'I', 'me', 'my', and 'myself' (keywords), and significantly fewer relative frequencies of 'he', 'his', 'him', 'her' and 'we' (negative keywords) in Henry's chapters.

Table 1 Over and underused pronouns in Henry's chapters

Word	Raw frequency in Henry's chapters	Normalized frequency in Henry's chapters	Raw frequency in reference corpus	Normalized frequency in reference corpus	Log Ratio	Log-Likelihood score
myself	35	0.21	26	0.06	1.73	21.55
his	32	0.19	252	0.62	-1.67	-50.92
him	28	0.17	181	0.44	-1.39	-28.06
I	1167	7.07	1137	2.79	1.34	483.77
he	94	0.57	556	1.36	-1.26	-74.58
her	33	0.2	182	0.45	-1.16	-21.47
me	266	1.61	303	0.74	1.12	81.61
my	255	1.55	323	0.79	0.96	60.95
we	78	0.47	289	0.71	-0.58	-10.85

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[3] In this chapter, we use 'story' and 'narrative' interchangeably for the telling of sequences of events.

These quantitative findings on their own can be explained in different ways. In social psychology, for example, frequent use of 'I' has been linked to an inward focus associated with anxiety, depression and even suicidal ideation (e.g. Baddeley et al., 2011; Rude et al., 2004). In the context of schizophrenia, unusual patterns in pronoun use (when compared with 'healthy' controls) have been implicated in problems with referential cohesion, which can lead to issues with coherence (see Gupta et al., 2018 and references therein). At the same time, one has to bear in mind that Henry was specifically tasked with describing *his* personal experience of events, and knew that other sections of the book would cover his family's views. He also runs away several times in the course of the narrative, so is often alone and therefore has no other participants or perspectives to include. However, a qualitative exploration of the ways in which these pronouns are used suggests interpretations more easily linked to mind style.

Self-references

Unsurprisingly, Henry uses 'I' when describing what he does or experiences and 'I' is often followed by verbs of action, particularly movement (e.g. 'went', 'run away') or cognitive verbs (e.g. 'felt' and 'thought'). Indeed, when using Wmatrix to identify key semantic categories in HD, the domains of 'Movement, coming and going' (Log-likelihood = 170.82, *Log Ratio* = 1.19) and 'Thought, belief' (Log-likelihood = 37.55, Log Ratio = 0.86) were both significantly overused compared to the reference corpus of 20th Century autobiographies. As previously noted, the frequent use of cognitive verbs in particular foregrounds the subjectivity of Henry's perceptions and can introduce a degree of uncertainty or ambivalence regarding the experiences described (for more detail see Demjén and Semino, 2015).

At the same time, some of Henry's self-references reflect a distinctive tendency to notice and pay attention to small details in his surroundings, and to interpret them as significant to himself or his circumstances:
   1) *I thought H stood for Henry* [on a fire hydrant]
   2) *I thought that Claren's story related to me but in a different way*
   3) *I saw the letter D painted on the road, and I thought this meant D for daemon, so I ran down an alleyway*

This pattern can be related to a so-called tendency for 'over-interpretation' (Bergamin, 2018) or 'aberrant attribution of salience' (Kapur, 2003), which has been linked with experiences of psychosis. People are described as 'detecting patterns in the '"random noise" of ordinary sensory and emotional stimulation' (Bergamin, 2018: 10) and incorporate this into making sense of the world around them, often in ways that diverge from accepted cultural norms and even personal experience up to that point. This gives the impression of a certain naïveté, as if a child was noticing things and trying to make sense of them for the first time. In Henry's case, it also suggests a heightened focus on the self, because things are not just 'over' interpreted, but interpreted in relation to him specifically.

Another distinctive tendency is for Henry to use the reflexive pronoun 'myself' together with 'I' and the verb 'find':
   4) *I found myself walking towards the police station;* (p. 173)
   5) *I climbed over another barbed-wire fence and found myself in the undergrowth beside the railway track.* (p. 39)
   6) *Now that I find myself in a mental hospital* (p. 33)
   7) *When I woke up, I found myself under my Peruvian rug with my special stone that somebody had given me in college lying next to me.* (p. 90)

As we indicated in the context of Excerpt 1, 'I found myself' suggests a sense of diminished agency: Henry may be moving around a lot, but he seems not to feel that he is entirely in control of these movements. He appears surprised by the locations in which he ends up, seemingly not foreseeing the consequences of his actions. This introduces a sense of uncertainty and gives the impression of a certain degree of disorientation.

References to others

The increased focus on Henry himself as described above, comes with a relative absence of a focus on others in Henry's chapters, as suggested by the underuse of third person singular and first person plural pronouns.

While linguistic patterns of absence are always difficult to interpret, a unique feature of the book is that we are often told about the same event by two different people – Henry and Patrick – which can reveal discrepancies in tellings. Based on this, we know that Henry does not just focus on his own perspective when he is narrating events where he is alone, but also in situations that involved other people:

8) *My father took me travelling in the summer. I went to Rome, which I did not like as much as Venice. We visited Paris […]* (p. 86)

The example above refers to a trip that, in Patrick's account, involved the whole family and not just Henry, and not even just Patrick and Henry (as signalled by 'we' in the second sentence of the example). This example helps to explain both the overuse of first person singular pronouns and the underuse of 'we' above. Even when Henry has the opportunity to use 'we', he sometimes only mentions himself.

Overall, based on his use of pronouns, Henry seems to focus on himself more than might be expected, even in an autobiography. He seems to turn inwards to his own thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and to interpret things in the external world in relation to himself. At the same time, he seems surprised and potentially disoriented by the consequences of his actions. The turning inwards, or focus on the self, we describe in this section speaks to an aspect of the phenomenology of Henry's psychosis that is not captured in the diagnostic criteria for schizophrenia, yet it seems to be a characteristic aspect of Henry's mind style.

Absences of others' minds

Another difference between Henry's and Patrick's accounts is how they report episodes where Henry does things that are, objectively speaking, quite dangerous for him, such as absconding from psychiatric institutions, spending days naked in the snow, swimming in icy waters and climbing railway bridges. Patrick and Jan write extensively about the upset that these episodes cause to the family, who fear for Henry's life on several occasions. However, when Henry talks about these same experiences, there is little or no attention devoted to other people's emotional reactions; without putting too much emphasis on Patrick's account (after all, Patrick and Henry have different objectives as narrators in HD), the absence of others' thoughts and emotions seems to be in line with other patterns of inward focus we have described so far. Henry describes his own inner world/mental states in detail, but does not devote much attention to the mental and emotional states of those around him:

9) *When I got to the hospital, my mother and her friend Nicky were there. The doctor wanted to cut my toes off, but I wouldn't consent to this. They did look blue at first, but they regained their colour. My feet were in a lot of pain because they had been warmed up too quickly. The doctor from the halfway house, a Dr Vile , came to tell me he had sectioned me again. The nights in the general hospital were uncomfortable and my feet were really hurting. I shouted for painkillers, but nobody came at first. I was moved back to Anselm […]*

10) *I left Brighton before Christmas, and my mother took me back to Canterbury. I told my parents that I wanted to break with family tradition and not go to Ireland for Christmas. The next day I walked into Canterbury* […].

Example 9 above relates the end of one in a series abscondings over a two-week period one winter. Henry had once again run away from hospital and been missing for several days. There are icy temperatures outside, and the family know that Henry has a tendency to walk around naked because that is what the voices tell him to do. Patrick comments on 'the sense of dread and imminent disaster that Jan and I felt hovering over us', and Jan mentions the 'emotional pummeling' caused by Henry's behaviour. In the example, Henry reports his first encounter with his mother after being found by the police and taken to hospital. His matter-of-fact account of his physical condition and subsequent events, with no indication of his mother's reactions, is in marked contrast with Jan's account of the same incident, which details both her own and Henry's apparent emotional state.

Example 10 is similar, although it does not involve a life and death situation. Going to Ireland, where Patrick's family is from, for Christmas is an important tradition for the Cockburn-Montefiore family. As a result, Henry's

decision not to join them caused some upset. Yet Henry once again mentions the decision only in passing and then proceeds to talk about something relatively minor that he did the next day.

This absence of others' minds in Henry's story telling can be related to problems with 'theory of mind' or 'mentalizing', i.e. the ability to attribute mental states both to one's own mind and to the minds of others. These problems have been associated with schizophrenia (e.g. Cummings, 2009: 104; Champagne-Lavau and Stip, 2010). In Henry's specific case, however, the issue seems to be a matter of focus rather than an inability to understand the minds of others. As Patrick puts it: 'Henry never showed any regret or remorse for the misery he inflicted on us through his disappearances over about five years. He remained affectionate with us and often sensitive to others, but he acted like what he did was taking place in a different world' (pp. 131-2). In an interview, when asked about this, Henry himself responds that this may have been selfish but 'I had to do it' (The Interview, 2011).

Narrow visual field as embodied self-focus

When other participants *are* mentioned in Henry's telling of events, a further distinctive pattern emerges, i.e. what we call 'narrow visual field', as in the three extracts below:

11) *It was so cold that I went back in the water, and I was there when a fisherman held out his hand.* (p. 32)
12) *I walked through the snow naked. A man appeared and said, "What are you doing?" He took me into his house* (p. 124)

In all three cases, Henry is outdoors in an open space in some form of potential danger: the sea in the English winter in the first extract, and (naked in) a snowy countryside in the second. On both occasions, he is initially alone, as far as he is aware, and is then approached by somebody who, in different ways, tries to get Henry out of his current predicament. In both cases, the individual involved is introduced via indefinite reference, as would be expected of new information both for the character/narrator and the reader: 'a fisherman' and 'A man'. However, in both cases, the person is introduced at a point when they are close enough to Henry to offer a hand or talk to him, though it is conceivable that, from his position, Henry would have been able to see and/or hear the individuals approaching from a long way. The use of the verb 'appear' in examples 12 also suggests that Henry was suddenly surprised by their presence and, one could infer, proximity.

The reporting in the three extracts above is consistent with Henry's more general tendency to concentrate on a very restricted portion of his here-and-now. In fact, this is arguably another, *embodied*, example of the self-focus we reported on earlier.

Level of detail and tellability

In the previous sections, we have pointed out some of the characteristics of Henry as a story-teller. In this section, we focus more specifically on his choice of detail in story-telling.

The extract below is an episode within Henry's account of one of his periods in a mental hospital:

13) *After a few months a couple of people I had known from Canterbury turned up. There was Jason, who was a bit younger than me and had tattoos in a Celtic design which he had done himself when he was in prison. Another friend I saw was Clive, who was black and from Jamaica and endlessly smoked roll-ups. We used to talk about music: he said you couldn't mix acid jazz with hip-hop.* (p. 218)

Both Clive and Jason are described in some detail, including Jason's tattoo and Clive's views about combining acid jazz and hip-hop. Neither is mentioned elsewhere in Henry's chapters, however, either before or after this extract.

On the one hand, it could be observed that extracts such as this are not prototypical in terms of a central feature of successful narratives: 'tellability'. Tellability is usually described as a characteristic of events as potential narrative material: some events (e.g. being involved in a car crash) are more tellable than others (e.g. brushing one's teeth). However, what is tellable varies from context to context (a dentist may be

interested in how you brushed your teeth this morning), and skilled story-tellers can turn unpromising material into an entertaining narrative (Ryan, 2005; Kukkonen, 2017). Ryan (1991, 2005) also points out that, in longer narratives, small details may contribute to the depiction of settings and characters, so that something that seems irrelevant when it is first mentioned may later turn out to be crucial. Given that Jason and Clive only appear once in Henry's chapters, however, and that no further detail is provided about their visits, mini-narratives such as the above could be described as low in tellability. On the other hand, however, Henry's decisions about what is tellable within his own story are in themselves significant, and revealing about the workings of his mind and the consequences for his lived experience. Henry clearly notices, values and remembers minute details about people and things that matter to him and that relate to his broader interests, including nature, drugs, music, and arts and crafts. In other words, his approach to tellability reveals something deeper about how he experiences and remembers his world, even if these details are ultimately inconsequential from a more traditional narrative perspective.

Story structure

While readers' comments on HD on websites such as Amazon and Goodreads are overwhelmingly positive, a few include criticisms to the effect that Henry's chapters are 'difficult to read and difficult to follow' (https://bit.ly/2SuS2hJ). This could be to do, in part, with another aspect of Henry's approach to story-telling, i.e. the way in which his narrative tends to be structured. The following is Henry's account of a brief visit to central London with his friends:

14) *(1) We sat on the bank of the river playing Bob Marley, and I felt a force pulling me into the Thames, but I resisted it and didn't jump in. (2) The tide was going out and we went down some stairs and sat on a stretch of sand. (3) A nice woman said there was going to be a concert on the sand later, and I saw the water lapping on the shore. (4) I said, "Move back, move back, sea." (5) A man whom I think was dealing heroin shouted "Fuck off" at me. (6) We walked to a place where there were skateboarders, and I saw a red bus crossing the Thames and felt I should have been on that bus. (7) A girl with a Russian accent asked to take a picture of us, and again I felt paranoid. (8) We were in Charing Cross, and everybody seemed to be looking at us, and I pulled a stupid face when she took the picture.* (pp. 192-3)

This example has several features of a 'story' about a particular episode within the longer narrative of chapter 15 in HD. It consists of the telling of a sequence of events in, we infer, chronological order and occurring in two spatially proximal settings. Several characters are involved, and there is an alternation between descriptions of settings (e.g. 'The tide was going out'), actions (e.g. 'We walked', 'I said') and Henry's subjective reactions to some of those actions (e.g. 'I felt a force pulling me'). In other respects, however, this is not a prototypical story, with a beginning, a middle and an end. In Labov's (1972) terms, sentence 1 can be described as providing the beginning or Orientation to this stretch of narrative, but there is no subsequent Complicating Action needing some form of Resolution at the end. This kind of telling is more akin to 'small stories' (Georgakopoulou, 2007) in structure, but occurs in a published autobiographical narrative rather than an informal conversation.

More specifically, extract 14 consists of a series of juxtaposed happenings, not obviously or explicitly connected by any causal links. Several sentences consist of two clauses separated by 'and'. The first clause describes an action (e.g. 'A girl with a Russian accent asked to take a picture of us' in sentence 7); the second clause describes Henry's perceptual or emotional reaction ('I felt paranoid'; see also sentences 1, 3, 6 and 8). Even though, in each case, a cause-effect relationship can nonetheless be inferred, the use of 'and' to connect the two clauses does not make it explicit.

A further characteristic of the extract is that there is less continuity than might be expected in terms of characters, or story participants. Apart from Henry and his friends, three different people are introduced as new information using the indefinite article 'a': 'A nice woman', 'A man' and 'A girl'. However, the first two are never referred to again. Indeed, the key word analysis we mentioned earlier revealed that 'a' is slightly overused in Henry's chapters (Log-likelihood = 30.14; Log Ratio = 0.4), while some third-person pronouns are underused (as we showed earlier). In view of extracts such as the above, this may be due to the fact that many entities are mentioned only once when they are new information, but the focus then tends to move

onto another new referent rather than staying with an entity that is already part of common ground (which would involve the use of definite reference, including third-person pronouns). The overall effect is one where people come into focus fleetingly for Henry, elicit some form of sensation or response in him, and then disappear from focus.

As in earlier sections, the main structural pattern in the extract above shows that Henry's own in-the-moment responses to people and actions dominate his experience of the world and are the main driving force in his narrative and, we infer, his mental world. On the one hand, this provides a more nuanced, linguistic perspective on labels that are used in psychiatry to describe the linguistic behaviour associated with schizophrenia diagnoses, such as 'deficits in coherence', 'derailment', 'tangentiality', and 'looseness of associations' (e.g. deLisi, 2001; Kuperberg, 2010; Marini et al., 2008; Perlini et al., 2012). Through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, we were able to not only provide systematic evidence for some for some of these features outside of laboratory conditions (cf. Gupta et al. ,2018), but also suggest reasons why such patterns might emerge beyond the idea that they are a symptom of a condition. On the other hand, we can say that, in Fludernik's (1996) terms, Henry's chapters are not primarily or solely driven by prototypical plot developments, but instead foreground his own 'experientiality' – 'the presence of a human protagonist and her experience of events as they impinge on her situation or activities' (Fludernik, 1996: 30). And in this case, both he and the readers know that his experientiality is unique to him.

This does not, however, detract from the fact that the peculiarities of Henry's story-telling can contribute to the perception of a distinctive mind style, which can account both for the hardships he experiences and for the diagnosis he received: being primarily focused on oneself and experiencing the world as a series of intense sensory and/or emotional reactions to minute characteristics of people, entities and actions can be disconcerting and overwhelming, and make it hard to achieve longer-term goals, especially when combined with voice-hearing and other hallucinatory experiences.

4.   Conclusions

In this chapter, we described some of the distinctive linguistic characteristics of Henry's chapters in the family autobiography, *Henry's Demons*. Using the stylistic concept of 'mind style' as our guide, we have explored Henry's individual 'mental world' in pursuit of a better understanding of his lived experience. We hope to have shown how this approach can contribute to research on health communication, broadly conceived.

A stylistic analysis can provide detailed and systematic evidence of how narratives such as HD may enable a deeper appreciation of mental and emotional experiences that are poorly understood and sometimes stigmatised, creating the conditions for greater empathy and acceptance. This kind of perspective on an illness experience is not easily gained from 'standard psychiatric texts', which are written from a detached, third-person perspective (cf. Oyebode, 2003: 269), nor from news reports, which tend to privilege negative and sensationalist accounts of mental health conditions (Bowen et al. 2019). With published narratives such as HD, a stylistic approach can also contribute to explain the book's success (both in terms of readership and of recognition from mental health researchers and professionals) and more generally increase understanding of the role a particular book or genre may play in public perceptions and debates on conditions such as schizophrenia. The Stylistics tradition also provides plenty of examples of how textual analyses can be triangulated against evidence from the study of readers' responses, whether these are elicited as part of the research (Whiteley and Canning, 2017) or collected from websites such as Goodreads (e.g. Nuttall, 2018).

In addition, a stylistic analysis may reveal aspects of lived experience that have not been discussed in the literature on the condition that a particular narrative is supposed to reflect. An example is the specific manifestations of Henry's focus on the self, a turning inward, that we have described throughout. In Demjén and Semino (2015), we made a similar point about Henry's tendency to use the verb 'feel' to introduce references to verbal processes when reporting voices that other people cannot hear (e.g. 'I felt the tree telling me …'). Such observations and findings do not of course have direct or immediate clinical relevance, but can feed into and enrich clinical research, especially in areas such as mental illness, where speaking and listening about patients' experiences are central to diagnosis and treatment.

It is one of the aims of this chapter, as part of the whole volume, to demonstrate the insights that can be achieved by bringing together clinical and non-clinical perspectives on (mental) health conditions.

5.   References

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