

# Adaptive Shifts: Identity and Genre in the Memorials of the 1820 British Settlers in the Cape Colony

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**Abstract.** Multiple reflections of social transformation are to be found within newly founded colonial communities, such as that of the early British settlers in South Africa (known as the '1820 Settlers') analysed in this study. Such reflections include indications of the genre transformations which may be traced in the 1820 Settler letters (petitions/memorials) addressed to the officials responsible for the colonial plan (1819-1825). Prior to the colonisation, for instance, this genre was clearly devoid of an affective component (Besnier 1990: 431; cf. also Katriel 2004: 4) which has surfaced in the colonial context. On a micro-level, it is echoed in, among others, the strategies of reporting speech which is understood here as a marker of stance (Włodarczyk 2007; cf. Biber 2004; Besnier 1993). The proposed features of genre transformation are illustrated here in the course of a linguistic comparison of two collections of letters presented in the paper. As example, some innovations are introduced in the correspondence of Jane Erith, a destitute settler whose property was destroyed in a fire and who sought support from the colonial authorities. In her writing, as a desperate colonial subject she confronts the disastrous inadequacy of the institutional sources of power as a way of resisting the established power relations (cf. e.g. Laidlaw 2005). The paper demonstrates that some connections between genre conventions and social upheaval may be revealed in the course of linguistic analysis.

**Keywords:** genres; petition; 1820 settlers; colonisation; affect; reported speech

## 1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is a linguistic comparison of two collections of petitions/memorials in order to demonstrate that modified genre conventions may reflect

social transformations, such as the British colonisation of the Cape of Good Hope (1820). First and foremost, a specific view of genres is presented as a framework for the analysis. This is followed by a structural and functional description of the collections under scrutiny and a comparison of them with respect to some specific features. The general analysis is followed by a case study of a selection of petitions written by an individual settler, Jane Erith. In the case study, affect realised as reported speech strategies is observed as an innovative feature of the genre whose traditional conventions were marked by the language of distance.

## 2. Genre

The term genre<sup>1</sup> in this paper describes texts sharing a communicative purpose and socio-historical background. According to Bazerman (1995: 82), genres come into being through repeated use of individual texts in similar situations. In due course, as Bazerman continues, “[t]hese typified utterances, often developing standardized formal features, appear as ready solutions to similar appearing problems” (Bazerman 1995: 82).<sup>2</sup> As such, genres are culturally transmitted in more or less conventionalised and formalised ways. In particular, ‘everyday’ genres, such as small talk, letter-writing, etc., continue to develop and transform in the individual and collective knowledge, as well as practice, to be transmitted over time throughout a given society. This approach to genres emphasises their intrinsic flexibility and, essentially, renders their formal aspect secondary. Thus, genres exist even without, or independent of, formal similarities, although their form serves as meta-information for their users (Miller 1984: 159). As Miller states, genre is “a conventional category of discourse based in large-scale typification of rhetorical action; as action, it acquires meaning from situation and from the social context in which that situation arose” (Miller 1984: 163). Adopting Miller’s understanding of genre as social action (1984) legitimises viewing two collections of texts, despite the internal heterogeneity and uniqueness of each, as illustrations of a single genre.

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<sup>1</sup> “Genre is viewed as an instance of language use in a conventionalized social setting requiring an appropriate response to a specific set of communicative goals of a disciplinary or social institution, and thus giving rise to stable structural forms by imposing constraints on the use of lexico-grammatical as well as discursual resources” (Bhatia 2006: 387). An alternative applied term is register (Biber and Conrad 2003). The two terms are sometimes used interchangeably.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Miller (1984: 152).

## 2.1. Genre and identity

Drawing on the long tradition of anthropologically and linguistically oriented genre studies, Bauman and Briggs emphasise the view of genres as “more than isolated and self-contained bundles of formal features” (Bauman and Briggs 1990: 63). Thus functioning as the loci of social performativity, genres essentially encode specific patterns of illocutionary force. Evolving and shifting in line with the major social and historical developments within communities or social groups, genres and their transformations mirror the (re)construction of individual and group identities. This view of genres seems particularly potent when applied to the inquiries into the identity-related processes of recontextualisation (cf. Bauman and Briggs 1990) observed within newly founded colonial communities, such as that of the early British settlers in South Africa (known as the ‘1820 Settlers’) analysed in this study.

## 2.2. The corpus

The aim of this study is to verify the assumption that the shifting identities of community members are reflected in the modifications of ‘everyday’ genres, in this case that of the petition/memorial. In order to observe shifts in genre conventions, the colonial texts need to be compared to similar texts from the pre-colonial period. For this purpose, a set of texts produced in connection with a turning point in British policy regarding its South African colony (1819) was selected. Prior to that, neither the first British occupation of the Cape of Good Hope (1775-1803), nor the second beginning in 1806 reached beyond the peninsula, and was aimed mostly at facilitating the trade with Asia (Thompson 1995: 53). In 1819, growing social unrest in the metropolis and the unresolved Xhosa issue in the Cape Colony prompted the British government to grant £50,000 for the transportation and accommodation costs of settling several thousand people in the Eastern Cape. The funds were to be dispensed by the Colonial Office in London. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of July 1819 the British government issued and published an official circular (*The Times* 17 July 1819; cf. also *The Times* 18 June 1819) pertaining to the above-mentioned settlement plan. The circular was also printed in a range of local newspapers all over Britain and distributed by the Colonial Office to interested parties upon written enquiry (cf. the letter by T. Charles <sup>3</sup> dated 30<sup>th</sup> July 1819 [1820Settlers.com]). In response to this, c.80,000 <sup>4</sup> applicants expressed

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<sup>3</sup> Upon personal inquiry at the Colonial Office, as the applicant states: “I was informed that by addressing a letter to you the particulars would be sent me” (1820Settlers.com; Charles, T. 30 July 1819).

<sup>4</sup> Wirgman (1901: 405) and Campbell (1897: 38) talk about 90,000 applications.

the wish to settle in the Cape of Good Hope (Thompson 1995: 55). The surviving record of this immense appeal<sup>5</sup> contains hand-written individual and collective letters of inquiry or application for the immigration scheme, addressed to Lord Bathurst, Secretary of State for the Colonies, or to his deputy Henry Goulburn. Out of those, c. 800 letters were first read carefully and 80 were selected for detailed analysis, thus constituting the first set of data used in this study, the pre-colonial corpus (c. 15,700 words). This corpus will be used to establish the major structural and functional features of the genre.

The second collection of texts investigated here comprises some early colonial settler writings, more specifically their letters addressed to the local authorities in Cape Town where the Colonial Office was located at the time (1821-1825). Settler letters from that period are filed in five volumes in the Cape Depot of the National Archives of South Africa (CO 158, 178, 201, 223, 249). No detailed catalogues exist for this collection, but the letters are filed more or less chronologically. It is hard to give an estimate of surviving data of a similar kind, but the collection itself comprises several thousand letters. For the purpose of this study, 54 letters constituting the colonial corpus were selected. In the course of analysis, this corpus will be checked for the major structural and functional features established on the basis of the pre-colonial corpus (c. 14,400 words).

Even a brief examination of the two corpora points to their generic affinity and continuity, both with respect to their text-external and internal criteria. Regarding the former, the motivations and aims of the authors and the power relations between the producers and receivers are similar. While the immigration applications seek further information on the colonial scheme, plead for deposit exemption, etc., the early colonial inquiries involve requests for financial support, an intervention in the grievances among the Settlers, permissions to leave the Colony, etc. The letters written in the metropolis are addressed to the central authorities responsible for the colonial policy, whereas the colonial letters are addressed to the local establishment. In both collections, an underlying confidence of individual citizens regarding the legitimacy of their inquiry or pledge and a firm expectation of a rightful response from the addressees are observed. With respect to their formal affinities, all the analysed texts were produced by the inferior addressing the superior, so they essentially involve some linguistic manifestations of deference. All the observed resemblances may be put down to the shared authorship and collective genre knowledge of text producers. However, despite the undeniable continuity, a comparison of the two groups of texts

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<sup>5</sup> In the *Quarterly Review* (July 1819: 205), the scale of interest is illustrated in the following way: “[...] crowds [...] daily thronged Downing Street, in order to await the decision of the Colonial Department on their applications to be enrolled [...]”

provides evidence for a dynamic nature of genres in general and their capacity for innovation in response to new contexts and functions (cf. Bhatia 2006).<sup>6</sup>

### 3. 1820 Settlers – a historical sketch

The 1820 Settlers<sup>7</sup> were transported to the colony in twenty-six ships of which the first two landed in Algoa Bay in April 1820, after a lengthy delay in their landfall port at Table Bay. Upon arrival, the settlers were placed in tents on the Main Street of Port Elizabeth, at that time rarely used as a seaport and populated by not more than 60 people<sup>8</sup> (Wirgman 1902: 405-406). Nearly a hundred wagons took the first five hundred people to an area in the vicinity of a small military post, Grahamstown,<sup>9</sup> in the territory<sup>10</sup> between the outlets of the Bushmans River and the Great Fish River (Hockly 1948: 59). As the latter bordered on the Fish River Bush, which provided the entrance for the native population into the colony, the selection of settler location was by no means accidental. On the one hand, the settlement was to provide a “living wall of defence”<sup>11</sup> (Campbell 1897: 44) from the natives and to sustain and reinforce the military headquarters of Grahamstown on the other. Not only were the settlers unaware of this fact, but they were also, through the publicity which the Government’s plan had received in the metropolis, “led to conclude the influence of the climate and fertility of the soil in Southern Africa to be such, that nature there yielded spontaneously her most valuable productions, and that the hand of man was required only to be stretched forth to gather them” (*Quarterly Review* July 1819: 205).

Due to a combination of political, natural and human factors, the settlement scheme held nothing but disappointment and disastrous consequences for the settlers (cf. Lester [1998a: 8]; Hall [1960: 172]. By 1824, when the second issue of the *South African Journal*, a non-government free settler periodical, was published, only half of the families of the 1820 Settlers were still residing in the area of

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<sup>6</sup> Bhatia views this contradiction as tension between “generic integrity” and “generic creativity” (Bhatia 2006: 388, 393); cf. Miller on “open class” (Miller 1984: 154).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Brunger (2003) for a detailed and updated description of the 1820 Settlers and their locations between 1820-1825.

<sup>8</sup> Campbell talks about 35 “souls” (Campbell 1897: 49).

<sup>9</sup> Originally, c. 3,700 people were located in Grahamstown in 1820. By the year 1837, however, the population was estimated at c. 2000 (*Saturday Magazine* Feb. 1837).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *Quarterly Review* (July 1819: 241-246) on the description of Zuurveld or Albany.

<sup>11</sup> The idea of creating a buffer against the attacks of the natives through settlement goes back to Colonel Richard Collins, Commissioner of the British Government, who advocated it in 1809 in his report following the inspection of the Cape Colony (Thompson 1995: 54).

Grahamstown (Brunger 2003: 56; cf. Hall 1960: 172 who talks of about a quarter). By that time, the growing resentment towards the local government was also strong enough not only for the editors<sup>12</sup> to voice their criticism in the above-mentioned journal, but also for the Settlers to pass their grievances on to *The Times*, complaining about the Governor's "insolent" response to their incentive of founding a literary society (*The Times* 3 Dec. 1823).

### 3.1. The 1820 Settlers as a community

The community of the 1820 Settlers, it is assumed, may be viewed as a 'local' community with respect to the linguistic manifestations of its members' shifting identities (cf. Silverstein 1998), even though the development of a unique linguistic variant of the imperial language emblematic of those new identities is not easily observed initially. In the transition to new identities, a simultaneous transition from a language community (metropolis) to a 'local' speech community (to borrow Silverstein's [1998: 406] dichotomy) takes place. Following Silverstein's definition (1988: 403-406) of the 'local,' its manifestations may be sought in the members' writing practices, especially in their communicative endeavours framed as 'everyday' genres, such as diaries or letters, the latter both of official and private nature, through which they actively participate, not without consequences, in the processes of textual production and reception. Among these genres, a particularly potent manifestation of the 1820 Settler identity may be found in the official letters in which they essentially assume the position of colonial subjects rather than independent individuals.

## 4. Letter-writing

The texts selected for analysis in this study fall within the broad communicative practice of letter-writing, more specifically of the official (non-private) sort. Letter-writing, significant as it is as a means of interaction and social participation, has since the Early Modern period (with growing literacy) been an extremely common and thus highly diversified form of textual activity (cf. e.g. Barton 2000). Therefore, its generic integrity is disputable and renders letter-writing more an umbrella term than a useful descriptive generic category.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, Mesthrie and West choose to stick to the "letters to the Governor" and "insurance

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Pringle's article in the May 1824 edition of the *South African Journal* "The Present State and Prospects of the English Emigrants in South Africa."

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Bergs, 2004 for a socio-pragmatic typology of letters in which requests are considered a subtype of petition, an appellative text addressed by a social inferior to a social superior.

claims" in their analysis of a selection of the 1820 Settler correspondence to the Colonial Office (Mesthrie and West 1995: 105). Contrary to this approach, for the purpose of this analysis, the importance of placing the analysed texts within a well-defined generic tradition and frame is advocated. In order to delimit this frame, it is first of all necessary to take into account the meta-referential clues provided by the authors, bearing in mind that "[a] genre exists only in recognitions and attributions of the users" (Bazerman 1995: 81). Thus, recurring in both letter collections, the words 'memorial,' 'memorialist' and 'petitioner' are considered crucial.

#### **4.1. Petitioning in the Cape Colony**

Following the above-mentioned clues, one arrives at a frame which, within the English linguistic circle in the early nineteenth century, is provided by the genre of petition/memorial. In the Cape Colony, petitions were as commonplace as they were contentious, both in collective and individual instances. The status of individual petitioning practices in the 1820 Settler community may be illustrated by the following quote from the proceedings of the British parliament dealing with the case of Mr. Burnett,<sup>14</sup> a banished settler who "found in his duty to represent his case in a memorial to his Excellency the Governor, with a *bona fide* view of obtaining inquiry and redress – a proceeding which he described to be warranted by the laws of all civilized states, and especially justified by those of his native country" [emphasis original] (*The Times* 25 June 1825). The petition itself, however, and some comments recorded within the same parliamentary session, shed a different light on the specific implications which this well-established practice might have had in the Cape Colony. Burnett described the fate of his memorial in this way: "That his Excellency, altogether slighting the prayer of your petitioner's memorial" commanded the prosecution for libel to begin (*The Times* 25 June 1825). Similarly, in an example quoted by one of the recorded parliamentary voices, a Mr. Hume, a story is presented of another "gentleman from the colony" who "was banished for five years merely for sending in a memorial" (*The Times* 25 June 1825).

On the collective level, the importance of the right to petition in the South African colony surfaced in 1823, when, following the ban on public meetings<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> On Burnett's affair and its importance for removing Lord Somerset from the office cf. Campbell (1897: 87) and Hockly (1948: 125-127).

<sup>15</sup> When the critical economic position prompted the settlers to call a public meeting in May 1822, the governor did not hesitate to use his "autocratic powers" (which he enjoyed until 1825) (Thompson 1995: 54). The meeting was banned, all public meetings were pronounced illegal and from that moment on were to be severely penalised. This decision proved critical in many respects.



issued in a Governor's Proclamation, the settlers resorted to addressing a memorial to the British Government dated the 10<sup>th</sup> of March 1823 and signed by 171<sup>16</sup> prominent colonists (Hockly 1948: 100). In this way, in the colonial context, the tradition of airing public opinion (long conventionalised in the metropolis) also found its continuation. As Heerma van Voss observes, in all of early modern Europe, "Petitions by ordinary people to political leaders at national level were one way to outmanoeuvre local elites" (Heerma van Voss 2001: 4). Undoubtedly, such was the intention (and the ultimate effect) of the 1823 settler memorial.

On the basis of the above-mentioned arguments illustrating the status and supporting the significance of the analysed genre for the community of the 1820 Settlers, it may be proposed that the analysed material is viewed from the perspective of a communicative practice of petition reaching back in time as far as mediaeval Britain.

#### 4.2 Petition, address, memorial

Naturally, petitioning in the Cape Colony is inevitably linked to the tradition of the genre fostered in Britain which needs to be briefly outlined at this point. As Zaret states, petitions arose in English mediaeval society in the context of parliamentary sessions acting as high courts, to which grievances were addressed requesting different kinds of relief from legal regulations (Zaret 1996: 1507). By the early 14<sup>th</sup> century, a distinction between private and public petitions had come into being. At the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, petitions began to show some conventional addressing formulae (cf. Myers 1937), while by the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, petitions' closings become conventionalised to *your [...] shall pray* (Nicholls 1993: 129). Due to the introduction of bills as means of parliamentary legislation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Zaret 1996: 1510), petitions remained private acts only. Still, Early Modern British society may be described as a petitioning one (cf. Patterson 1993). Prior to the most widely researched period in the history of this genre, i.e. the English Revolution (cf. Skerpan 1992; Zaret 2000; Knights 2005), petitions were common individual and collective communicative practices of all social classes proliferating as a consequence of the contemporary role of patronage. Defined as "deferential requests for favor or for redress of a problem" (Zaret 1996: 1510), petitions became the locus of public voice in political disputes after 1642 when they began to be printed on a regular basis. The importance of petitions and related texts for the formation of public opinion and a legitimate public voice in connection with the emerging print culture has been studied by Knights (2005). In his opinion, petitions, addresses and similar texts, despite a range of

<sup>16</sup> Campbell talks about over 200 signatures (Campbell 1897: 97).



formal differences, are closely related as subscriptional genres which were instrumental in the construction of public discourse and the *national political culture* in the political system of a participatory nature [emphasis original] (Knights 2005: 110-113) in 17<sup>th</sup> century Britain. Similarly, according to Heerma van Voss, "In England, by the late eighteenth century, petition has become the normal way in which the unfranchised could make their opinion known" (Heerma van Voss 2001: 4).

While Zaret and Knights focus on the petitions linked to a particularly sensitive point in the growth of British public discourse, How (2003) scrutinises private manifestations of the genre. According to him, the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Britain witnessed a growing popularity of letter-writing manuals containing instructions concerning the art of writing petitions. Analysing a collection of private letters addressed to the Duke of Newcastle in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, How classifies them as belonging to the genre of "petition or memorial asking for some form of preferment" (How 2003: 145). How's conclusions with respect to the formal aspect of petitions are similar to those of Knights (2005), who views the language of loyalty and humility as their unifying feature. What is more, Knights further emphasises the decisive function of rigid rhetorical design for the realisation of the illocutionary goals of the authors, as well as for the political interpretations of petitions (Knights 2005: 112). Furthermore, How agrees with the above authors (cf. Zaret 1996: 1514; Knights 2005: 118)<sup>17</sup> that, as in the times of the English Revolution, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century the most significant building block of petitions was deference to the addressee, by definition, a person of higher rank whose dignity was particularly easily offended.

### **4.3 Text-external features and the theoretical framework**

The instances of petition/memorial analysed in this study are assumed to continue the rhetorical tradition referred to above, but, as non-private documents they are also at least likely to represent a formal register with frequent expressions of linguistic and social distance (cf. Bergs 2004: 208-209). When power relations are involved, as is the case in public or institutional discourse, it has been found (cf. e.g. Nevala 2004) that opposing linguistic strategies are used by inferiors addressing their superiors (as in requests) and superiors addressing their inferiors (as in orders). The linguistic strategies involved are lucidly described within Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory (1987) and viewed as positive and negative politeness respectively. For the texts analysed in this study, determined by the nature of the producer-recipient relationship, negative politeness strategies

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<sup>17</sup> Knights (2005) refers to this feature as the use of language of loyalty and humility, while Zaret calls it "deferential and juridical rhetoric" (Zaret 1996: 1514).

are expected to prevail. One further feature of non-private writings (Bergs 2004: 209) to be borne in mind is their relative lack of the expressive component. Thus, on the basis of the traditions of the genre, as well as the findings of investigations into writings of a similar sort in the history of English, the assumption as to the occurrence of negative politeness strategies and the avoidance of expressive elements is well-justified and will be corroborated in the following analysis.

#### 4.4. The pre-colonial corpus

The similarities observed in the text-external features of the collections analysed here are indubitable, but patterns of text-internal features need to be revealed in the course of a structural and functional analysis. Thus, firstly, each of the corpora under scrutiny will be discussed individually, to lay the foundations for a subsequent detailed comparison. In the course of a structural and functional description, the degree of homogeneity of the texts constituting the two collections will be indicated. The dynamic nature of the genre will not only be corroborated through the differences between the metropolitan and the colonial attestations, but it will also be verified in the structural/functional diversity observed within the corpora.

##### 4.4.1. Structural and functional features of the pre-colonial petition/memorial

Even though no evidence can be quoted to substantiate the claim that the applicants have been trained in writing petitions, instances are found among the analysed settler applications of text producers plainly indicating the genre they followed as a model for their writing. Although only constituting a fraction of the corpus (12,5%), this prototypical petition/memorial deserves a comment. First of all, except for a strict structural organisation (cf. Figure 1 below; the capitalised underlined elements are optional), the content presentation conforms to the rigid formula of T (title) ending in *states*, *sheweth* or *herewith* followed by the paragraphs/sentences starting with *that* (optionally gerundival phrase, e.g., *having disposed of [...]*). In consequence, the contents are framed in the statement of T, rendering the petition/memorial (and not the subscribed) rhetorical agents of the content presentation. In this way, the 1<sup>st</sup> person reference is avoided (impersonalisation) and the degree of indirectness increases, as the text producer/subscriber is only referred to in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person as *Your petitioner/memorialist*. In the framework of Politeness Theory, such choice indicating that the subscriber does not want to impinge on the recipient is regarded as a negative politeness strategy (Brown and Levinson 1987: 190). If T is omitted, the impersonal salutation (*May it please [...]*) fulfils the introductory function for the statements in the body C.

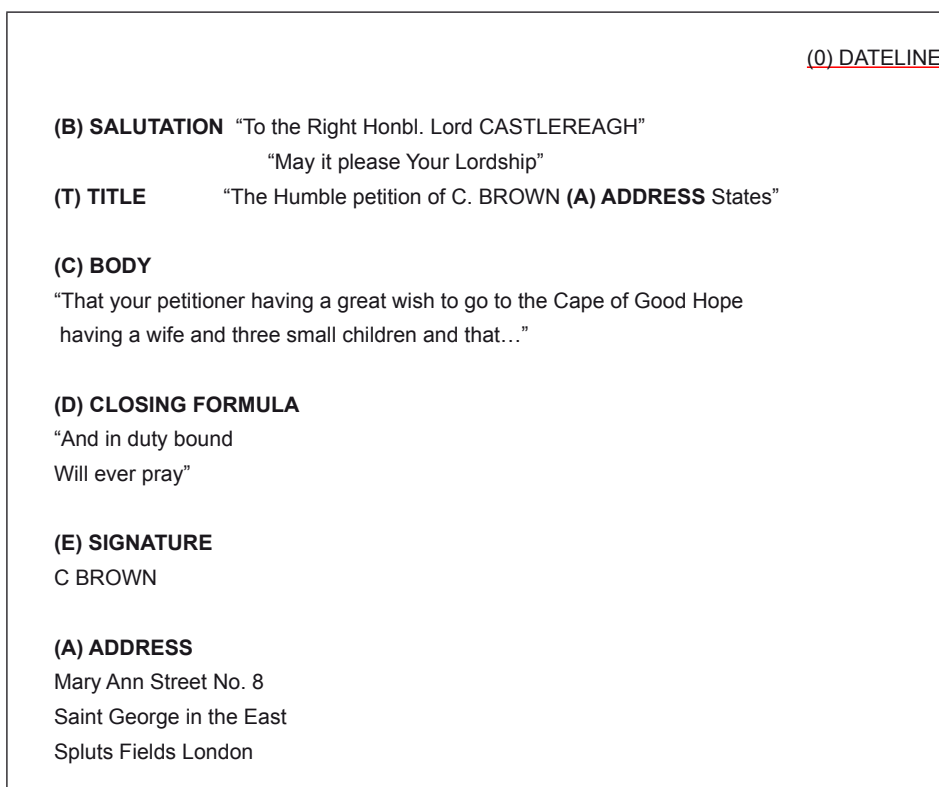


Figure 1. Structural organisation: the prototypical petition/memorial

Applying the Swalesian analysis (cf. Swales 1990; Upton 2002) to the prototypical petition/memorial, the following functional units, i.e. moves are discerned:

<p><b>MOVE 1:</b> Making application/Seeking information Offering service/participation in the settlement scheme/requesting consent/information</p> <p>"Understanding it is the intention of His Majesty's Government to send out settlers to the Cape of Good Hope, I humbly offer myself for this [...]" (Batchelor, J.)</p>
<p><b>MOVE 2:</b> Claiming eligibility Giving personal/professional details/credentials/references/description of former service</p> <p>"[...] being brought up the first twenty years of my life in farming &amp; [...]" (Batchelor, J.)</p>

**MOVE 3:** Expressing gratitude/hope

Acknowledgement of prospective response/assistance/positive decision

"Should this application meet your approbation I humbly solicit such instructions as may be necessary on such an important occasion as [soon as] possible that I may order my affairs accordingly." (Batchelor, J.)

Figure 2. Move features of the prototypical petition/memorial

Move 1 is the core constituent, even though it is missing from two letters. Moves 2 and 3 are optional and one of them is omitted in approximately one third of the analysed letters, while all the moves occur in over a half of the letters. Move 3 is the only clearly structurally demarcated one typically preceding the closing formula D, while 1 and 2 frequently overlap. Not infrequently, moves are split or repeated in the body of the text.

Table 1. Totals of move features (pre-colonial corpus)

[1]	[2]	[3]
78	58	51
97%	72%	64%

One interesting aspect to be discussed when applying Swalesian analysis is the arrangement of the functional features discerned. The following table presents the possible options in the moves arrangement in the pre-colonial corpus. Clearly, the range of options in feature arrangement is broad, indicating the flexibility of sequential organisation.

Table 2. Options in feature layout – pre-colonial corpus

[1]	[1][2]	[1][2][3]	[1][3]	[1][3][2]	[2]	[2][1]	[2][1][3]	[2][3][1]	[3][1][2]
12,5%	13,75%	36,25%	13,75%	2,5%	2,5%	5%	12,5%	1,25%	-

Despite the structural distinctiveness of the prototypical petition/memorial, the functional constituents through which its communicative purpose is realised are also found in the non-prototypical applications constituting the vast majority of the corpus. Thus the prototypical and non-prototypical petition/memorial show no significant differences either with respect to the illocutionary purpose or the rhetorical structure. The prototype, which is in the minority, clearly yields to the less rigid and more direct realisation of the genre in question. The absence of the impersonalisation strategy observed in the prototype also renders the new

model less negatively polite. This, essentially, is not without consequences for the structural organisation, which is slightly modified in the new model (cf. Figure 4 below).

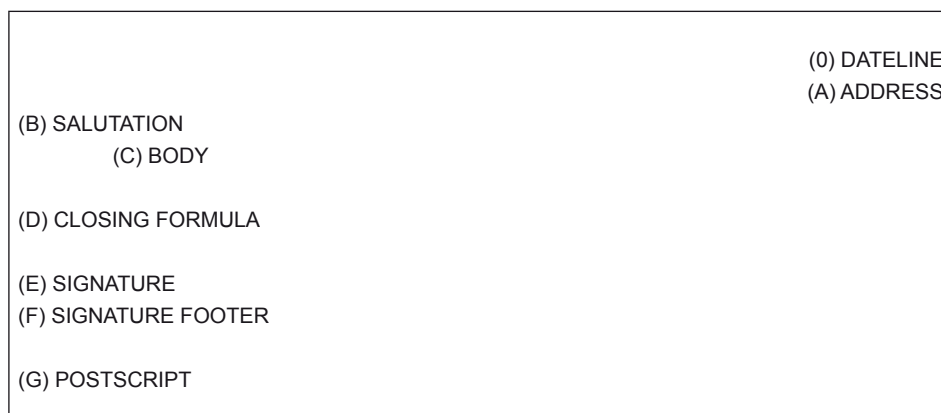


Figure 3. Structural organisation (pre-colonial corpus)

Although the model shows some variability, with the only obligatory element being the body (C), the majority of settler applications abide by it. Two elements, (F), signature footer, and (G), postscript, in particular, may be viewed as additions, occurring respectively in no more than 20% and 7% respectively of all the analysed letters. Omissions of other elements are rare and call for a specific explanation. (B), salutation, and (D), closing formula, are respectively left out in fewer than 15% and 5% of all applications. The applicants fail to give their address, (A), in 10% of cases; the date is omitted in 14% of cases; while (E), signature, fails to appear twice only. The layout is quite strict with the exception of (A), which in 53% of cases occurs in the header, in 35% of cases in the footer, in 12% of cases it stands both in the footer and header and in 4% of cases it is found in the body of the letter (Figure 5).

Table 3. Totals of structural and move features (pre-colonial corpus)

[0] <sup>18</sup>	[A]	[B]	[D]	[E]	[F]	[G]
69	72	68	76	78	16	6
86%	90%	85%	95%	97%	20%	7%

<sup>18</sup> A single case is found in the footer rather than in the header.

#### 4.4.2. *The politeness of petitioners*

The overview of the petitioning tradition given above shows that, to adopt Knights' term (2005), subscriptional texts, be they of a private, individual, collective or official nature, rely on a specific type of rhetoric. The formal conventions of petition throughout its tradition in Britain (Knights 2005; Zaret 1996; How 2003) emerged as a result of the reverence and humility of petitioners. Along these lines, Knights emphasises the carefulness and politeness of the language used in petitions (Knights 2005: 113). How illustrates the linguistic manifestations of deference, be they in public or individual petitions, through the use of capital letters and the avoidance of abbreviations prescribed in eighteenth century letter-writing manuals<sup>19</sup> (How 2003: 146). This rhetoric of deference, as Zaret puts it, is clearly observed in the structural and functional features of text organisation in the analysed corpus of texts (Zaret 2000: 90). In the former group, elements B and D, involving addressing and greeting, are clearly indicative of the producer-recipient power relations. The degree of social distance, however, does not appear to affect the presence of addressing and greeting formulas (cf. Table 4), which are omitted only infrequently.

The rhetoric of deference/negative politeness is also realised through the functional units discerned in the petitions. Any instance of petition/memorial, by definition involving a request, is intrinsically face-threatening<sup>20</sup> to the recipients negative face. Thus, the theory further assumes that some redressive strategies will be applied by the producer in order to mitigate face threats to the recipient (on record, with redress). The receiver's freedom from imposition may, in the case of asymmetrical power relations, additionally generate derivative face wants to be respected by the producer. For one thing, the recipients may feel the need for overt confirmation that they are more powerful than the producer and, secondly, they might wish to highlight the producers' dependence on their power. The response to the former on the part of the producer is to show deference and esteem to the addressee of the request/offer, while to satisfy the latter, the producer may in plain terms indicate incurring a debt (Brown and Levinson 1987: 209). Thus, moves (1) and (3) being intrinsically face-threatening as they involve an offer/request and expression of prospective gratitude, respectively, call for redressive action. The attempted redress is usually achieved by the following negative politeness strategies illustrated below: giving deference (a), minimising imposition (b), apologising (c) or hedging (d).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Nevala reporting on some further conventional encodings of respect in letter-writing instructions of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (Nevala 2004: 274-275).

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Fludernik's statement on the "face-threatening patron-suppliant scenario" (Fludernik 2004: 339).

- a) "I beg leave most respectfully to enquire" (Evans, D.)
- b) "should your Lordship be pleased to consider" (Emrie, W.)
- c) "Excuse the liberty I have taken in addressing you" (Erith, J.T.)
- d) "I beg if it is not incompatable with the nature of your office, nor anything improper in my present mode of Application, that you will have the Goodness to inform me if" (Addams, J.)

The above-mentioned strategies were marked in the analysed corpus as: FOR (polite formula) (a and b), P (polite move) (c and d), MOVE 3 (incurring debt). The B and D elements, i.e. the salutation and closing formula respectively, were also taken into consideration as negative politeness strategies (indicative of deference) and all the elements were counted resulting in the following totals:

Table 4: Totals of negative politeness strategies (pre-colonial corpus)

	Number of letters	% of letters
FOR	81	66%
P	25	27%
Move 3	62	64%
B	68	85%
D	76	95%

The above totals show that polite formulas (FOR) and the 'debt-incurring' strategy (Move 3) are roughly equally distributed among the analysed letters. The strategies of apologising and hedging, (P), only occur in just over one fourth of all letters in the pre-colonial corpus. Salutation, (B), and the closing formula, (D), are by far the most frequent embodiments of deference. Due to the structural difference between the prototypical and the new realisation of the genre, the omission of the salutation in the former does not really render it less polite. The prototypical realisations aside, 17% of letters only fail to show more than two types of the analysed politeness features, including two letters with a single feature only and one letter with none (Figure 7). Furthermore, 19% of letters include three of the analysed features, 51% include four or all of them. Bearing in mind the relatively high degree of negative politeness of the prototype due to the structurally determined indirectness and impersonalisation, the total percentage of letters which may be described as highly negatively polite amounts to over 80% in the pre-colonial corpus.



[0] July 27<sup>th</sup> 1819

[E] John CLARK, [F] Turner, [2] and I live with my father at [A] 11 Wellington Street Black Fryars Road.

[1] Business is very dull and I have a desire to go.

Figure 4. The letter with none of the analysed politeness features (pre-colonial corpus)

The above discussion of the structural and functional features of the pre-colonial corpus has shown that two different models of the genre of petition/memorial were used in the metropolitan instantiations. The prototype, the less common model, is characterised by a greater fixedness of the structure and a high degree of formality encoded in its structure. Bearing in mind the rhetoric of the traditional petition as described, e.g., by How (2003), it is likely to continue this line. The departure from the prototype attested in nearly 90% of cases, has to be viewed as an innovation resulting in a less rigid structure. Rather than determining a high degree of formality, the new model leaves some room for the users' choices as to the degree of deference. The majority of users, as has been shown above, choose to show a great degree of deference, thus making the 'new' model highly negatively polite too.

#### 4.4.3 *Structural and functional features of the colonial petition/memorial*

The share of the prototypical memorial (as described in the pre-colonial corpus) in the analysed colonial texts is c. 33% (as opposed to 12,5% in the previous corpus). This, however, needs to be treated with a degree of caution, as the sample here is smaller and the texts selected for analysis may not be representative. Still, this figure is indicative of the important and undiminishing place of the prototype in the colonial realisations of memorial/petition. Another explanation of the share of the prototypical memorial in the colonial corpus is provided by Lester (1998b) who claims that following the settlement, a strong need to maintain metropolitan class and gender divisions surfaced in the community.<sup>21</sup> If this is translated into the institutional power relations, the frequency of the more 'conservative' form is no longer so unclear. Even though the prevalence of the 'new' model is less obvious in the colonial corpus, an interesting development is observed where the two meet. Three of the analysed texts (5%) may be viewed as 'bridges' between the traditional and innovative instantiation of the genre. In those texts,

<sup>21</sup> "[...] immediately following the settlers' transplantation, those discourses that helped maintain the upper classes' social supremacy were accordingly intensified" (Lester 1998b: 516).

the T frame of the prototype responsible for the impersonalisation and indirectness is lost, but the 3<sup>rd</sup> person reference to the producer (*Your Memorialist*) may be used in the body of the letter (interchangeably with 1<sup>st</sup> person) and is present in the subscription. The ‘bridge’ memorial, as we may call it, also involves the characteristic salutation (*May it please [...]*).

With respect to the structural organisation, the colonial corpus introduces an additional element addressing the correspondence to a specific clerk of the Colonial Office. The address precedes the letter and is placed centrally if lengthy, or at the top on the left hand side if brief.

To His Excellency General the R <sup>t</sup> Honourable Lord Charles Somerset Governor of the Cape of Good Hope &c &c &c _
To Harry Rivers Esq <sup>r</sup> Landdrost of Albany

Figure 5. The placing of targets in the memorial (colonial corpus)

As far as the other structural elements are concerned (cf. Table 5), the footer and F, signature footer, and G, postscript, are truly optional, or even exceptional, while 0, dateline, D, closing formula, and E, signature, are found in almost all letters. The address is frequently left out which may be put down to the fact that the Settlers’ locations were known to the colonial government. The relatively frequent omission of a salutation, B, (present in 85% of letters in the pre-colonial corpus) is largely determined by the high incidence of the prototype.

Table 5: Totals of structural and move features (colonial corpus: 54)

[0]	[A]	[B]	[D]	[E]	[F]	[G]
<b>52</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>96%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,85%</b>	<b>1,85%</b>

As far as the move analysis of the colonial texts is concerned, slight modifications on the earlier model are observed. In particular, the modifications concern MOVE 2, the scope of which is wider than in the settlement applications. This is connected with a different content range of the colonial corpus covering many aspects of settler life; hence the background information in MOVE 2 is determined by the nature of the memorial and may involve detailed descriptions of settler conditions. The modified move structure of the colonial corpus is presented below.

<p><b>MOVE 1:</b> Making application/Seeking information Requesting consent/assistance/information</p> <p>"I have therefore to solicit Your Lordship kindly to interfere on my Behalf and oblige the Gentlemen of the Gofham Chambers to allow me support for myself and family until matters can be finally adjusted" (Campbell, M. H.)</p>
<p><b>MOVE 2:</b> Providing justification/giving information Giving details concerning the present personal/financial/health condition</p> <p>"I need not mention to Your Lordship that I am a female stranger destitute of a single Male protector and that I am still on my Location" (Campbell, M. H.)</p>
<p><b>MOVE 3:</b> Expressing gratitude/hope Acknowledgement of prospective response/assistance/positive decision</p> <p>"Your humble memorialist entreats your Excellency's favorable answer to this her ___"(Clarke, C.)</p>

Figure 6. Move features in the colonial corpus

MOVE 2 is the only obligatory one suggesting that the colonial petition, apart from the application function, central to the pre-colonial corpus, (MOVE 1) has also become a site for transmitting information. MOVE 3 (gratitude expression) has a limited application, only occurring in one third of all letters and is the only truly optional move.

Table 6. Totals of functional move features – colonial corpus

[1]	[2]	[3]
<b>51</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>94%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>33%</b>

As far as the arrangement of functional features is concerned, the colonial corpus shows much less diversity than the pre-colonial. Out of the available ten options, the colonial corpus only shows seven, two of which are almost negligible (single occurrences). More than half of the analysed texts use the [2] [1] structure and over 20% more use it followed by Move 3. Adding the 5% in which Move 2 occurs on its own, nearly 80% of all letters start with a justification, followed by application or application and gratitude sequence of moves.

Table 7. Options in feature layout – colonial corpus

[1]	[1][2]	[1][2][3]	[1][3]	[1][3][2]	[2]	[2][1]	[2][1][3]	[2][3][1]	[3][1][2]
-	<b>9,26%</b>	<b>1,85%</b>	-	-	<b>5,56%</b>	<b>53,70%</b>	<b>22,22%</b>	<b>1,85%</b>	<b>5,56%</b>

4.4.4 *The politeness analysis*

The analysis of politeness features established for the pre-colonial corpus yielded the following results:

Table 8. Totals of negative politeness strategies (colonial corpus)

	TOTAL	% of letters
FOR	93	96%
P	12	22%
3	19	33%
B	36	66%
D	53	98%

The application of polite formulas and closings are the most frequent strategies of negative politeness and are only missing from 4% and 2% of letters respectively. Again, hedging and apologising are the least frequent manifestations of deference (c. one fifth of all letters). As far as the frequency of politeness elements is concerned, only 8% of ‘new’ memorials (the ‘bridge’ model included) use only two or fewer, while three features occur in c. 30% of cases. Over 30% of ‘new’ memorials in the colonial corpus apply more than four politeness elements and may be described as highly negatively polite. Given the share of prototypical texts in this corpus and the high degree of negative politeness encoded in their structure, the overall ratio of highly negatively polite letters in this corpus is 94%.

The results described above do not depart substantially from the statistics established for the pre-colonial corpus. Even though the ratio of highly negatively polite letters to those less negatively polite is 17 to 83 in the pre-colonial and 6 to 94 in the colonial corpus, there are no dramatic discrepancies in their distribution. As with the difference in the share of the prototypical memorial in the corpora, the disparities of distribution with respect to the negatively polite features are more likely to be indicative of genre continuity than of its structural or functional transformation.

	PRE-COLONIAL	COLONIAL
2 or fewer features	17,50%	5,56%
3 features	18,75%	29,63%
4 and more	51,25%	31,48%
Prototype	12,50%	33,33%

Figure 7. Comparison of negative politeness features in the two corpora

## 5. Distinctive features of the colonial corpus

This section is devoted to the verification of the assumption that through the colonial realisation of petition/memorial an affective component was introduced into the rhetorical strategies of the genre. There is no denying that “a multichannel phenomenon, affect floods linguistic form on many different levels of structure in many different ways” (Besnier 1990: 421). However, this analysis only focuses on reported speech as a linguistic correlate of affect recurring in the colonial corpus.

### 5.1 Affect – stance – reported speech

Affect is understood here as a lexicalised, i.e. overt linguistic metacomment on the proposition (Besnier 1993: 163). This approach to affect comes close to Biber’s definition of stance as “epistemic or attitudinal comments on propositional information” (Biber 2004: 107). The unquestionable connection between stance and reported speech has been noticed by e.g., Besnier (1993) and confirmed for a corpus of Early Modern English courtroom material by Włodarczyk (2007). To pursue this line of research, particular interest in this study is devoted to the application of “affect-leaking” strategies (Besnier 1993: 178) occurring in the instances of speech reporting in the 1820 Settler writings.

In the pre-colonial corpus, reported speech occurs in the following context:

- When the author is somebody else’s representative
- When the author mentions references, be they personal networks or people from whom references may be obtained
- In quoting extracts of external correspondence
- In quoting extracts from the settlement circular

The instances of reported speech referred to above may be viewed as evidential, in the sense that the source or the anterior utterances are verifiable. Consequently, none of the above-mentioned instances of reported speech involves affect-leaks understood as the incorporation of a personal perspective of the speaker.

Next to similar applications of reported speech, a much more complex scope of pragmatic functions may be observed in the colonial corpus, more specifically in the correspondence of an individual settler, Mrs Jane Erith.<sup>22</sup> For the pur-

<sup>22</sup> Jane Erith, the wife of James Thomas Erith, an independent settler party leader, experienced great poverty and hardship as a consequence of a fire on their estate. The Eriths were involved in a lengthy conflict with their neighbours over a piece of land. In connection to that, they sought help in the Colonial Office, to which they addressed numerous petitions between 1820 and 1823. In 1822, J.T. Erith travelled to London to present his case to Parliament (Woods 1968).

pose of discussion of the “affect-leaking” aspects of reported speech, a reference will be made to the traditional dichotomy of DS (direct speech) and IS (indirect speech) based on person deixis, even though it has been shown to be a “grammatical fiction”<sup>23</sup> (Ebert 1986: 156; cf. Waugh 1995; Thompson 1996; Collins 2001; Goodwin 2003). The analysis assumes the view of reported speech as a pragmatic phenomenon.

### 5.1.1 *Direct speech*

Direct speech is used on several occasions, thus revealing the creative and theatrical dimension of reporting (Wierzbicka 1974) and the “involvement-creating capacity” (Collins 2001: 69; Clark and Gerrig 1990: 793-94) of the text. Dialogue is foregrounded and, despite the aura of objectivity, it is by nature manipulative, as it breaks discourse coherence and requires additional processing effort. The following specific functions may be attached to DS:

- Polyphony- heteroglossia:
  1. M<sup>r</sup> Erith is met with a Reply of “None of Your Damned Affectation. You know Damned well you are In Dixons Ground” (19 Feb. 1823)
- Parody
  2. therefore instead of M<sup>r</sup> Brink remarking “so much for your Veracity M<sup>rs</sup> Erith” I may say – “so much for Your Veracity M<sup>r</sup> Brink” (23 Dec. 1824)
- “Constructed dialogue” (Tannen 1986)
  3. the following conversation paused, which has strongly impressed my mind ever since [...] I asked M<sup>r</sup> Hayward [...] “Do you consider we built in our own Ground” [...] “Most decidedly not” [...] “For why do you consider we did not” [...] “Because that part of the Ground is in M<sup>r</sup> Disons Diagram. and I have nothing but Official Document to Act from” [...] “Is that Your Only reason” [...] “Most assuredly it is” [...] (10 May 1825)

### 5.1.2 *Indirect speech*

As far as the pragmatic potential of indirect speech is concerned, Matoesian refers to an “intertextual gap” between the reporting and the reported events (Matoesian 2000: 883). As he claims, this gap may be maximised in indirect and minimised in direct speech. On the other hand, the deictic shifts in DS may also

<sup>23</sup> Włodarczyk (2007) discusses the pragmatic view of reported speech and provides a detailed overview of categorisation approaches in linguistic literature problematising the direct/indirect speech dichotomy.

serve the purpose of abdicating responsibility. The maximisation of the gap in IS is achieved through the processing of information and aspects of its presentation, such as the choice of tags. Due to its deictic pivot, which is identical to the perspective of the current 'speaker,' IS contributes to discourse cohesion and its demarcation need not be as clear as in the case of DS. In Jane Erith's memorials, indirect speech serves the following purposes:

- Manipulative framing
- 4. When M<sup>r</sup> G replied with a Sneer "He would be answerable for all consequences" (6 Aug. 1822)  
I take the Liberty to beg you will explain to me  
for why you should at Government House Yesterday  
hold a threat over my Head that if I published what  
I had just stated to His Excellency the Governor "you  
Would put the utmost rigour of the Law in force  
against me" [...] (23 Dec. 1824)

The following examples demonstrate an even broader inventory of reported speech strategies in Jane Erith's correspondence. The way quotation marks are used may be viewed as an act of "changing hats" (Goffman 1981: 145):

- Loaded single words:
- 5. [...] my present seeming "**troublesomenefs**" [emphasis mine - M.W.]  
would never have occurred (8 Aug. 1825)
- 6. As Your Lordship was pleased to "**decide**" [emphasis mine - M.W.]  
the Fine Businefs (previous to the Trial taking place) (8 Aug. 1825)

In combining the boundary marking characteristic for DS with the deixis of IS, the speaker makes the best of both worlds. She is able to exploit the appearances of objectivity, abdicate responsibility and create involvement, while at same time presenting a processed chunk of discourse clearly involving her own personal perspective.

At a certain point in the series of letters written by Jane Erith to the Colonial Office, the reported speech strategies she applies may be viewed as an attempt to traverse the social role of a helpless subject by means of some empowering reported speech strategies (IS framing and quotation marks), none of which were to be found in the pre-colonial letters analysed above:

- 7. My Lord/  
With whatever view Your Lordship holds back my  
Property, is to me immaterial, but I certainly consider Your  
Lordship is aſsuming a Power - **Illegal - Offensive and Unjust**  
therefore if Your Lordship still **persists** in such conduct



and any thing serious happen my Children in consequence  
I shall consider Your Lordship as Accelsary thereto  
I consider Truth (without Ceremony) and plain Truth  
must be spoken . \_ And therefore I **forewarn** Your Lordship  
that "My Children are at home without Food, and I have  
no means to purchase it" such conduct must have an  
**Horrible termination** (21 Sep. 1825) [emphasis mine - M.W.]

## 5.2 The conclusion

The instances of a wide scope of pragmatic functions of reported speech in the letters of Jane Erith are indicative of an incorporation of affect into the generic conventions of the petition/memorial. Despite a rather insignificant structural and functional transformation of the genre in the colonial context, its rhetorical dimension was broadened substantially. The observed shift is most importantly indicative of an attempt to adjust the conventional patterns of settlers' discursive practices observed in the metropolis to the new context. More specifically, the unambiguously power-determined style of petition or memorial was, prior to colonisation, clearly devoid of affective dimensions (Besnier 1990: 431; cf. also Katriel 2004: 4), which it undoubtedly acquired in the colonial context. Viewed from this perspective, the dynamics of the everyday genre maintaining the connection between the individual and the institutional sources of power may be explained through the response and resistance of the former to the disastrous inadequacy of the latter (cf. e.g. Laidlaw 2005). As Besnier explains, in the hands of the oppressed "affective styles are frequently used to manipulate asymmetries" (Besnier 1990: 436). The participation in the transformed genre invites the "dialogic moments" (Katriel 2004), the presence of which was excluded from its metropolitan incidences. In the genre transformation, a decontextualisation and a recontextualisation take place, which involves assuming control and revising the patterns of social power (Bauman and Briggs 1990: 76). There is evidence that analogical processes apply on the level of individual discursive activity. Jane Erith, who, devoid of social power was forced to "recontextualise" (Katriel 2000: 16-17) claims for help from the local authorities after the calamitous fire on her property, may serve as a good example here. In the sense of Katriel (2000: 16-17), Jane Erith's departures from the rules of the genre (memorial) are indicative of a dialogic moment in the life of the individual, but possibly also the whole community or group ("locus of authenticity," "potentially humanizing force" [Katriel 2000: 17]). Clear as it is, the case of Jane Erith illustrates an individual modification of the generic conventions of the memorial. Therefore, in order to substantiate the

shift to affect in the colonial writings on the basis of a broader selection of informants and discourse features, further evidence needs to be explored.

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