

Building Voice and Style: Using Phatic Utterances

I just like saying Phat.

Phatic utterances constitute a mode of action just in their being voiced. In short, a phatic utterance communicates not ideas but attitude, the speaker's presence, and the speaker's intention of being sociable.

Phatic utterances are nearly content free. They serve mainly as reminders, reminders to the readers that they are in contact with a mind, a person, a personality. They can help us understand the ETHOS behind the writing and connect with that ethos. They also serve to indicate and remind the reader of the closeness or distance by the writer to the topic. Think of them as the equivalent of a physical signal, a nod, a wink, a smile or frown, in a conversation.

They imply a closer relationship between writer and reader.

as it happens	for that matter	for some reason	I suppose
it turns out	in the final analysis	just between us	in spite of everything
in point of fact	and whatnot	just between you and me	to my dismay
when all is said and done	believe it or not	you know	it seems to me
my Lord	if you know what I mean	to no one's surprise	as unlikely as it may seem
for God's sake	of course	as I believe is the case	It occurs to me
to my relief	I can't help but wonder	one might ask	as we can see
as I've pointed out	in a way	in a sense	not to mention
to some extent	to a certain extent	as is widely known	as everybody knows
you know what	let me tell you	make no mistake	that is to say
after all	we need to consider	in my mind	and I believe that it is
amazingly enough	curiously enough	fittingly enough	almost inevitably
it goes without saying	after a fashion	if time permits	if conditions are favorable
let's face it	if truth be known	If you must know	I am reminded
I might add	it is important to note	it is important to remember	to be honest
to everyone's surprise	not surprisingly	let's face it	it seems to me