

Identifying Viewpoint in an Extract from John le Carré's *A Perfect Spy*

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Abstract

This paper presents findings from an analysis of point of view in an extract from John le Carré's *A Perfect Spy*. A range of analytical frameworks has been put forward to account for the realisation of point of view in prose fiction, a common approach involving the categorisation of different types of narration as a means of distinguishing the perspectives being presented. This approach is taken by Fowler (1986/1996), who introduces a taxonomy of narration based on the two general categories of internal and external narration. In my analysis I focus firstly on identifying the different viewpoints evident in the extract; the scene concentrates on two characters, and I argue that each character's viewpoint, as well as that of the narrator, is indicated to differing degrees. I then assess the extent to which this extract can be classified using Fowler's taxonomy of narration, arguing that whilst this framework may be useful on a more general level of analysis, when applied to more specific extracts demonstrating a complex style of viewpoint presentation, the account provided can be seen as lacking in precision.

1 Introduction

Point of view in fiction has been widely studied as it is this aspect of a work that shapes a reader's understanding of the story world. The position from which events are presented as being experienced contributes to how different characters and events are perceived and understood by the reader. If, for example, a story is presented from within the consciousness of a first-person narrator who is also a participating character, the reader is more likely to feel 'close' to this character as they have access to his or her thoughts, feelings, and perceptions, and as a result are more likely to sympathise with this particular character's experience.

A range of analytical frameworks have been developed to account for the realisation of point of view in prose fiction and the resulting effects. One common approach has been to categorise types of narration as a means of identifying the perspective(s) being presented, the main distinction made being that between narrator and character point of view. Examples of such approaches are (a) Uspensky's taxonomy of point of view (1973), which also formed the basis of Fowler's (1986/1996) and Simpson's (1993) models, and (b) Genette's taxonomy of focalization (1980).

Identifying the viewpoint presented in a text can range from being relatively straightforward, such as in the case of a first-person character-narrator, to being more complex, where, for example, frequent shifts in perspective occur, or ambiguities as to whose point of view is being presented arise. One such example of complex viewpoint presentation is the novel *A Perfect Spy* by John le Carré, where often the weaving together of different viewpoints occurs, making it difficult at times to distinguish exactly whose viewpoint is being presented.

In this paper, I analyse in detail an extract from the novel to show the linguistic and stylistic features that lead to this weaving together of viewpoints. Due to the limited size and scope of this paper, as a method of analysis, I focus on just one of the frameworks mentioned above, Fowler's taxonomy of narration, and show that although this gives a broad account of viewpoint presentation in the extract, it is unable to account precisely for more subtle shifts and combinations of viewpoint presentation.

The two research questions I address are as follows:

1. How useful is Fowler's taxonomy of narration in accounting for more complex styles of viewpoint presentation?

2. What linguistic and stylistic features does le Carré employ in *A Perfect Spy* to create the weaving together of different viewpoints and what are the effects of this style of viewpoint presentation?

2. Fowler's Taxonomy of Narration

Fowler's work on point of view is a development of Uspensky's (1973) work, and involves the initial distinction of three planes; spatio-temporal, psychological and ideological point of view. It is within the plane of psychological point of view that Fowler outlines his taxonomy of narration. McIntyre defines psychological point of view as related to, "the choices an author makes with regard to the various ways in which a story might be narrated" (2006, p. 41). It is concerned with *whose* perspective events are presented from, whether character(s) or narrator(s) and the linguistic indicators that can be used to identify this point of view. For Fowler, psychological point of view concerns,

...the question of who is presented as the observer of the events of a narrative, whether the narrator or a participating character; and the various kinds of discourse associated with different relationships between narrator and character (1996, pp. 169-170).

He therefore uses the term to refer to the viewpoint presenting the story, whether character or narrator, whereas it was used more specifically by Uspensky to refer to a narrative presented through the consciousness of a particular character. The two main categories of narration established by Uspensky and forming the basis of Fowler's taxonomy are termed "internal" and "external" narration.

2.1 Internal Narration

Fowler uses the term "internal narration" to refer to the narration of events from within a particular character's consciousness, either with that character taking on the role of narrator, or by a narrator assuming an omniscient viewpoint, able to access the internal states of the character. This category is characterised by what Uspensky (1973, p. 85) terms *verba sentiendi* - verbs of thought, feeling and cognition. Fowler distinguishes two sub-categories based on these variants, which he labels type A and type B. He defines them as follows:

Internal narration is, then, narration from a point of view within a character's consciousness, manifesting his or her feelings about, and evaluations of, the events and characters of the story (which I shall call Type A); or from the point of view of someone who is not a participating character

but who has knowledge of the feelings of the characters-a narrator, or the so-called 'omniscient author' (Type B). (Fowler, 1996, p. 170)

Fowler (1996, pp. 170-171) describes internal narration type A as being written either in the first person or in the third person with clear indicators of the character's "world-view" or presentation of their thoughts being evident. Type B takes the form of third-person omniscient narration rather than the third-person character-based viewpoint of type A. For Fowler, internal narration type A is the most subjective form of narration; he views it as being, "internal and wholly subjective" (1996, p. 174). There are problems with this view, however, as some type A narratives (particularly those written in the first person), may be less subjective and more "external" than some type B narratives, for example the novel *L'Étranger* by Albert Camus (see Simpson, 1993, pp. 56-62 for a discussion of this).

A further issue that arises with the categorisation of internal narration in this way is that the same general sub-category is used to account for the varying degrees of "subjectivity" (closeness to character) that will be present within it. Despite Fowler saying that in type B narration "to a greater or lesser degree, the author gives an account of the mental processes, feelings and perceptions of the characters..." (1996, p. 173), it can be argued that his framework does not focus on accounting for this "greater or lesser degree".

2.2 External Narration

External narration occurs when the events of a story are presented from a position outside any particular character's consciousness, therefore excluding any thoughts or feelings that character may experience, and is further divided into two types by Uspensky. The first of these is the "objective" presentation of events as they happened, without comment or evaluation from the narrator - Fowler's corresponding category is external narration type C.

There are problems however, with finding examples of pure external type C narration; Fowler himself says that it is, "virtually impossible to remove all modal and psychological indicators from a text" (1986, p. 178), and this issue is discussed further by McIntyre (2006, p. 28). He sees it as having implications for the framework as a whole, again raising the more general problem with categorising whole texts or whole sections of text as one type of narration. He expresses his concerns through the following question:

if an otherwise purely externally focalized narrative contains just one instance of the presentation of a character's internal state, does this mean that the whole narrative should not be considered an example of external focalization?' (McIntyre, 2006, p. 35)

The second type of external narration (Fowler's type D) differs from the first in that it does take into account the opinion and the impressions of the narrator. It is characterised through the use of non-factive expressions (words of estrangement), metaphors and comparisons (see Fowler, 1996, p. 178). However, these indicators can also be features of internal narration, when one character is focussing on another, speculating as to the internal state of that character, for example. They can therefore also more generally be seen as indicators of a limited viewpoint, whether of character or narrator.

3 Analysis of Viewpoint Presentation in an Extract from *A Perfect Spy*

3.1 The Extract Selected for Analysis

In this section, I analyse an extended extract from *A Perfect Spy* in order to exemplify some of the issues raised in the discussion of Fowler's taxonomy of narration above, as well as to address the second research question as outlined in the introduction. The extract is included below and sentences have been numbered for ease of reference. It has also been tagged for speech and thought presentation categories, as reference is made to these in section 3.2.2 below. The categories used are those from Leech and Short's clines of speech and thought presentation (1981/2007), which were further added to by Semino and Short (2004).

The extract I have selected for analysis takes place near the beginning of the novel. The protagonist, Magnus Pym, has arrived at a boarding house in Devon after leaving his home and work in Vienna. Pym has stayed at the boarding house several times before and therefore knows the owner, an elderly lady called Miss Dubber, quite well. The scene takes place on the day of Pym's arrival at the house after he has been to a funeral in London, something that Miss Dubber asks about because she sees he is wearing a black tie. It traces the conversation between the two characters before Pym goes up to his room.

Although the scene is reported by a third-person omniscient narrator, the viewpoint through which events are presented is quite complex as the same perspective is not portrayed throughout. Instead, different elements of the text can be attributed to different viewpoints; some to the narrator alone and others to the narrator presenting one of the two character's points of view. It can be argued therefore that, at times, the narrator chooses to present the limited viewpoint of Miss Dubber, having knowledge of Pym only in the context of such visits and being unaware of his real identity and reasons for his visit, whilst at others, Pym's own attitude towards the elderly lady, one of fondness but also of amusement towards her character and way of life, can be seen. The extract reads as follows:

Pym drank tea for Miss Dubber [N], Pym appeased her [N-NRSA], Pym ate a piece of her shortbread [N] and praised it to the skies [NRSAp] although she told him [NRS] it was burned [IS] (1). Pym promised [NRS] to mend the sink plug for her [IS] and unblock the waste-pipe and take a look at the cistern on the first floor while he was about it [IS-FIS] (2). Pym was swift and over-attentive [N] and the brightness she had shrewdly remarked on [eNRSAp] did not leave him [Nli] (3). He lifted Toby on to his lap and stroked him, a thing he had never done before, and which gave Toby no discernible pleasure [N] (4). He received the latest news of Miss Dubber's ancient Aunt Al [NRSAp], when normally the mention of Aunt Al [NVp] was enough to hurry him off to bed [N] (5). He questioned her, as he always did, about the local goings-on since his last visit, and listened approvingly to the catalogue of Miss Dubber's complaints [NRSAp] (6). And quite often, as he nodded her through her answers, he either smiled to himself for no clear reason or became drowsy and yawned behind his hand (7). Till suddenly he put down his teacup and stood up as if he had another train to catch [N] (8).

'I'll be staying a decent length of time if it's all right with you, Miss D. I've a bit of heavy writing to do [eNWh] [DS] (9).'

'That's what you always say. [eNRSait] (10) You were going to live here for ever last time [eNRSAp] (11). Then it's up first thing and back to Whitehall without your egg. (12) [DS]'

'Maybe as much as two weeks. (13) I've taken some leave of absence so that I can work in peace (14). [DS]'

Miss Dubber pretended to be appalled [NI] (15). 'But whatever will happen to the country? (16) How shall Toby and I stay safe, with no Mr Canterbury at the helm to steer us? [DS] (17)'

'So what are Miss D's plans? [DS]' he asked winningly [NRS], reaching for his briefcase, which by the effort he needed to lift it looked as heavy as a chunk of lead [N] (18).

'Plans? [DS]' Miss Dubber echoed [NRS], smiling rather beautifully in her mystification [NI] (19). 'I don't make plans at my age, Mr. Canterbury (20). I let God make them (21). He's better at them than I am, isn't he, Toby? (22) More reliable [DS] (23).'

'What about that cruise you're always talking about? [eNRSApit] (24) It's time you gave yourself a treat, Miss D [DS] (25).'

'Don't be daft. That was years ago (26). I've lost the urge. [DS] (27)'

'I'll still pay. [DS] (28)'

'I know you will, bless you. [DS] (29)'

'I'll do the phoning [eNVh] if you want (30). We'll go to the travel agent together (31). I looked one out for you as a matter of fact (32). There's the Orient Explorer leaves Southampton just a week away (33). They've got a cancellation (34). I asked. (35) [eNRSAp] [DS]'

'Are you trying to get rid of me, Mr. Canterbury? [DS] (36)'

Pym took a moment to laugh [N-NI] (37). 'God and me together couldn't dislodge you, Miss D, [DS]' he said [NRS] (38).

As a result of the weaving together of three perspectives, often with ambiguity as to exactly whose perspective is being shown, a constant and subtle changing of viewpoint can be seen as occurring throughout the extract. This poses problems with using Fowler's taxonomy of narration to account for the viewpoints presented and the resulting effects, as the style of narration in the extract does not correspond fully to any of the categories employed. In this analysis I look at indicators of the different viewpoints presented and discuss the resulting effects.

Section 3.2 addresses the sections of the extract that could be attributed to a narratorial point of view alone, focusing initially on choices made in relation to the narration of events, before turning to the choices made regarding speech presentation. In 3.2.3 and 3.2.4, the sections of narration that provide comments on the behaviour and reactions of the characters are analysed, as well as the degree of omniscience presented by the narrator. Section 3.3 is concerned with the identification of indicators of the presentation of Miss Dubber's point of view and section 3.4 then focuses on the indicators of Pym's point of view.

3.2 Narration and Point of View in the Extract

Using Fowler's categories of internal and external narration, because the scene in question is presented by a third-person narrator who describes what is happening but does not state explicitly the characters' thoughts or feelings, this extract appears to be an example of

external narration. However, despite this lack of reference to the thoughts and feelings of the character - there are no instances of *verba sentiendi* - other more subtle indicators of the characters' internal points of view can be identified, highlighting again the problem with making a definite distinction between internal and external narration. The style of narration in this extract can be contrasted with the scene immediately after, where over a page is taken up with events presented from within the consciousness of Miss Dubber, with internal narration (NI), free indirect thought (FIT) and direct thought (DT) predominating. In comparison with the extract in question, it is clear that the subsequent scene displays more evidently the type of internal narration as outlined by Fowler.

3.2.1 Narration of Events

It can be argued that the actions of the scene are described by the narrator and not from the perspective of either of the two characters. It is possible, however, for the reader to make inferences from the vocabulary used and from the style of narration about their internal points of view.

The first paragraph is structured around the narration of actions carried out by Pym and expressed through a sequence of past simple verb phrases. There are 24 past simple verbs in this paragraph, 19 of which have Pym as the subject, and 16 of these denote an action rather than a state. These actions are separated either by descriptions/observations connected to them, or comparisons to Pym's "usual" habits on such occasions. This listing in quick succession of Pym's actions, along with the inclusion of some value-laden expressions at the start of the paragraph reflect how he is behaving and give some indication of why he is behaving in this way. In the first sentence we read:

Pym drank tea for Miss Dubber, Pym appeased her, Pym ate a piece of her shortbread and praised it to the skies although she told him it was burned (1).

The choice of the preposition 'for' rather than 'with' in the first clause makes it immediately clear that Pym's actions are for the benefit of Miss Dubber, that he wants to please her. This attitude towards her is further reinforced by the use of the verb 'appeased' in the subsequent clause, which serves as a value-laden expression, as it does not simply describe an action undertaken by Pym, but evaluates his behaviour towards Miss Dubber as well as allowing inferences to be made regarding her character. The term implicates that she needs placating and Pym is aware of how he should behave to achieve this.

The impression given in the first sentence of Pym being keen to please Miss Dubber (by complimenting enthusiastically her burnt shortbread, for example) is built on through the style of narration of Pym's actions in the remainder of the paragraph. The predominance of references to him as subject of a sentence or clause, made either by name or using the third person pronoun, (15 references compared with only 2 for Miss Dubber) show him to be the more active character, reflecting his eagerness to do as much as possible to keep Miss Dubber happy. Even in clauses introducing Miss Dubber's speech Pym remains the subject of the verb, he 'receives' or 'listens' to what she says rather than Miss Dubber being the active participant and speaking to Pym. This has the effect of reflecting Pym's attentiveness to what she is saying, and again it is clear that he is behaving in this way for Miss Dubber's rather than his own benefit.

3.2.2 Speech Presentation as an Indicator of Narratorial Viewpoint

Speech in the first paragraph is either reported indirectly or summarized by the narrator. As with the narration of actions, this again leads to the point of view of the characters not being as apparent in the presentation of speech. In the first paragraph there are four instances of NRSA, one of these embedded within narration, two instances of NRS followed by IS, and one instance of FIS. Consequently, all speech is mediated by the narrator, who is therefore more evident here than in the sections of FDS and DS in the subsequent paragraph. Of the relationship between narratorial point of view and method of speech presentation, Leech and Short say that,

When a novelist reports the occurrence of some act or speech act we are apparently seeing the event entirely from his perspective. But as we move along the cline of speech presentation from the more bound to the more free end, his interference seems to become less and less noticeable until, in the most extreme version of FDS, he apparently leaves the characters to speak entirely on their own. (2007, p. 206)

Narratorial point of view is therefore also shown in the choices made regarding which sections of speech to summarize, which to report indirectly, and which to report directly, and again the reader can make assumptions based on the form of speech presentation selected.

So for example, in the first paragraph some sections of speech are summarized in just a few words, such as Miss Dubber's relating to Pym of her 'latest news' and her 'catalogue of complaints'. Through this summarizing of what can be assumed are quite lengthy periods of speech, the narrator is also showing that the exact content of what Miss Dubber is saying is trivial and instead the relationship between the two characters is foregrounded. The

impression is given of Pym letting Miss Dubber speak at length on topics that are not particularly interesting for him, just to please her, and his encouraging reactions such as nodding her through her answers achieve this. Miss Dubber may not, however, view the things she is talking about as unimportant and were the conversation presented from her point of view, more detail may have been included.

In the sections of direct speech in sentences 9-38, feelings and attitudes can be attributed to each character based on the content of what they are saying, such as Pym's wish for Miss Dubber to go away on a cruise and her unwillingness to leave her home and do so, despite his persistence. It can also be assumed that the content of the direct speech is more important than that of the summarized sections in the first paragraph, so the fact that Pym intends to do some writing during his visit and that he is keen for Miss Dubber to leave him on his own can be regarded as significant information.

3.2.3 Narratorial Comment on the Behaviour and Reactions of the Characters

Narratorial point of view can also be seen through the use of some adverbs in the reporting clauses of speech (see McIntyre, 2006, pp. 32-33). The use of these adverbs allows the narrator to add comments on how things were said/received or, in one case, perceived by the characters. The four examples of adverbs used in this way are as follows:

the brightness she had *shrewdly* remarked on did not leave him (3)

listened *approvingly* (6)

he asked *winningly* (18)

smiling rather *beautifully* in her mystification (19)

The first three adverbs here again enable the reader to make inferences regarding the perceptions and attitudes of the characters. The fourth is slightly different as it shows something about the appearance of Miss Dubber when reacting to something Pym has said and could also therefore be interpreted as indicating Pym's point of view, as it can be viewed as more external than the other adverbs used.

In the first example, the adverb 'shrewdly' provides a comment from the narrator's point of view on what Miss Dubber had noticed on Pym's arrival. The adverb confirms for the reader that Miss Dubber was indeed correct in her observation and gives her earlier remark credibility, as the point of view of the narrator can be accepted as more reliable. It also shows

Miss Dubber and the narrator sharing the same impression of how Pym is behaving, and therefore the remainder of the sentence could be interpreted either as narratorial comment on Pym's behaviour, or as Miss Dubber's continued awareness of Pym's bright mood.

The second example can be interpreted in different ways. Firstly, it could be the narrator's point of view, evaluating Pym's attitude to what Miss Dubber is saying and thereby enabling the reader to make inferences about Pym's internal point of view. It can be assumed that Miss Dubber's report to Pym about the 'local goings-on' includes nothing of any importance or that would cause him concern, and that he is therefore pleased with what she is saying. In addition, the narrator could be using the adverbs 'approvingly' and 'winningly' to build on the impression created of Pym 'appeasing' Miss Dubber, encouraging her as she is speaking.

However, the narrator could also be presenting Miss Dubber's point of view, seeing Pym's reaction and understanding it as him being interested in what she is saying, thereby encouraging her to continue talking. Because of the other indicators discussed, such as the summarizing and trivialising of her speech by the narrator, the reader is unlikely to view this reaction in the same way Miss Dubber does, and the adjective could be seen as highlighting her limited viewpoint. This in turn can lead to inferences about Pym's viewpoint being made – he is purposefully responding in an 'approving' way as he wants Miss Dubber to form the impression that he is interested in what she is saying. This ties in again with his behaviour throughout the scene in terms of being eager to please Miss Dubber.

The adverb 'winningly' can be interpreted along the same lines as 'approvingly'. It can be seen as the narrator evaluating Pym's external behaviour, or as Miss Dubber's point of view, seeing Pym's encouraging manner towards her. This again could lead to the inference being made that Pym is purposefully giving this impression, and the subsequent conversation gives a reason for this – he is trying to convince Miss Dubber to go on a cruise. The use of these adverbs therefore results in complex viewpoint effects, indicating all three perspectives on some level.

This highlights a further problem with using Fowler's taxonomy to account for more complex styles of viewpoint presentation, as they tend to rely on more direct indicators of point of view, yet inferences play an important part in the identification of the point(s) of view presented. In addition, because the same linguistic feature here could be interpreted as representative of all three viewpoints, the categorisation of these sentences according to the taxonomy would not be possible.

3.2.4 Narrator Omniscience

As mentioned in section 3.1, the narrator in general seems to be presenting an “external” view of the scene, without attributing any verbs of perception, cognition or emotion to either character. Despite this, however, there are some less explicit indications of the internal state of the characters, such as the use of the adverbs above, allowing for inferences to be made regarding Pym’s intentions as well as his attitude towards what Miss Dubber is reporting. A further example of the narrator having access to the internal states of the characters can be seen in sentence 15 where we read, “Miss Dubber pretended to be appalled”. As a result, it can be argued that there are indicators of the omniscience of the narrator in the extract as some access to the internal states of the characters is given.

In contrast to this, however, there are other features that denote the presentation of a more limited viewpoint at times, demonstrating explicitly a lack of access to the internal states of the characters. One example of this is the phrase “for no clear reason” in sentence 7, showing that the viewpoint presented cannot work out why Pym is smiling. Indicators such as this suggest that the perspective presented does alternate within the extract, at times representing a more omniscient viewpoint and at others a more limited one. This point is discussed further in the next section as the changes in the degree of omniscience shown can be seen as the narrator choosing to present the more limited viewpoint of Miss Dubber.

3.3 Indicators of Miss Dubber’s Viewpoint

In section 3.2.1 the argument was put forward that the focus placed on Pym in the narration of actions in the first paragraph could be seen as indicative of narratorial point of view. However, it could also be argued that Miss Dubber’s perspective can be seen through this pattern in the narrative. This focus on Pym made evident through the significantly higher number of references to him than to Miss Dubber, could be seen as representative of Miss Dubber’s point of view, observing Pym’s behaviour and trying to determine his frame of mind. There is explicit mention of her noticing his mood, referred to in sentence 3 as follows,

Pym was swift and over-attentive and the brightness she had shrewdly remarked on did not leave him.

Miss Dubber’s observation of Pym’s “brightness” is linked to his behaviour towards her – complimenting enthusiastically her shortbread, and making promises about all the jobs he will do around the house, for example. Conclusions cannot be drawn, however, as to whether Pym’s externally cheerful demeanour is reflective of a similar internal state, although Miss Dubber does come to this conclusion after Pym has gone upstairs and she has more time to

think about it. On page 14 of the novel we read, “His loss has not affected him, she decided in relief”.

Even within conversation between the two characters, requiring active participation from both sides, Pym still remains the main focus, despite the impression given from expressions such as “the latest news” and her “catalogue of complaints”, that Miss Dubber actually says more. As discussed in section 3.2.2, the speech of both characters is reported indirectly or summarized in this paragraph, yet 7 of the 9 reporting verbs included refer to Pym. As a result, when Miss Dubber is speaking, more emphasis is placed on the receiving of what was said, rather than the content or manner in which it was said. The effect of this can be seen as one of watching Pym and observing his behaviour and reactions, and could therefore also be consistent with the viewpoint of Miss Dubber.

A further indicator of Miss Dubber’s observation of Pym and therefore the presentation of elements of the scene from her point of view is the frequent comparisons made between this current visit and previous visits. A context for Pym’s behaviour is provided based on the knowledge and experience Miss Dubber has of him in this situation. Such comparisons can be seen in the following sentences,

He lifted Toby on to his lap and stroked him, a thing he had never done before
(4)

...normally the mention of Aunt Al was enough to hurry him off to bed (5)

He questioned her, as he always did... (6)

Through the adverbs of frequency employed, “never”, “normally” and “always”, Miss Dubber’s awareness of similarities and differences to Pym’s “usual” behaviour can be seen. So for example, it is clear that Pym is not normally interested in hearing about her aunt and it can therefore be inferred that on this occasion, his interest is still not likely to be there, but instead he is making an effort to be more patient than usual.

Although the instances of adverbs of frequency in sentences 4-6 are not explicitly attributed to Miss Dubber’s viewpoint in the text, the content of the direct speech following this first paragraph reinforces this element of narration as being representative of her perspective, as adverbs of frequency continue to be included. When Pym tells her he will be staying for a while her reply for example is, “That’s what you always say” (10).

Also indicative of the presentation of Miss Dubber’s point of view is the explicit inability shown at points in the extract to make inferences about Pym based on visual aspects of the

scene. The use of a non-factive verb, an “as if” clause and adjectives of perception can be seen to denote this limited viewpoint, where sense is trying to be made of some of Pym’s reactions but no definite conclusions can be drawn. Sentence 18 reads, for example,

‘So what are Miss D’s plans?’ he asked winningly, reaching for his briefcase, which by the effort he needed to lift it looked as heavy as a chunk of lead.

The non-factive verb, “looked as” shows that the viewpoint presented is limited, there is a lack of certainty as to how heavy the briefcase actually is, despite the visual evidence leading to the inference being made. It is likely then, that the narrator here is presenting Miss Dubber’s viewpoint rather than a narratorial viewpoint alone, as a third-person omniscient narrator would not need to make such inferences and demonstrate uncertainty. A further example in which a limited viewpoint is presented is in sentence 6:

And quite often, as he nodded her through her answers, he either smiled to himself for no clear reason or became drowsy and yawned behind his hand.
(6)

The phrase “for no clear reason” shows that the viewpoint presented is again trying to account for Pym’s reactions but is not able to do so and is therefore indicative of the presentation of Miss Dubber’s viewpoint rather than a narratorial viewpoint. However, whilst it remains unobvious to Miss Dubber why Pym is smiling to himself, it is possible for the reader to infer here that Pym is actually smiling to himself as he is amused by Miss Dubber and what she is saying.

3.4 Pym’s Point of View

As discussed above, there are instances in the extract where Pym’s internal point of view is shown to a certain extent by the narrator. It is clear, for example, through the use of “for” and “appeased” in sentence 1 that Pym is intentionally behaving in a charming way towards Miss Dubber in an attempt to humour her. However, a distinction needs to be made between the narrator describing or indicating the point of view of a character and elements of the scene being presented from that character’s point of view. Those examples of Pym’s internal state being indicated as mentioned so far are done so through narratorial comment on his behaviour, or style of narration depicting his behaviour, but not through presentation of the scene from his perspective.

Evidence in the text of the presentation of events from Pym’s point of view can be seen but is perhaps less obvious and more ambiguous than those features described above as being presented from Miss Dubber’s perspective. There are nevertheless some lexical items

employed in the narrative that are not explicitly attributed to Pym but which can be interpreted as coming from his point of view. These are used in reference to Miss Dubber's topics of conversation and are consistent with the impression given by the narrator of the way Pym sees Miss Dubber.

For example, the summary of her speech in sentence 6 as a "catalogue of complaints" trivializes what is going on in her life and reinforces the view of her as needing "appeasing". Therefore, as well as being able to attribute this phrase to narrative description, it is also possible to interpret it as the presentation of Pym's point of view. Similarly, the reference in sentence 5 to Miss Dubber's "ancient Aunt Al" could also be understood in the same way. Here it is clear that we are not experiencing Miss Dubber's viewpoint, as she would be unlikely to refer to her aunt in this way. The phrase could therefore either be interpreted as narratorial comment alone or equally could be seen as Pym's characterisation of the old aunt that Miss Dubber often talks about and that he usually tries to avoid hearing about.

4 Conclusion

In this analysis I have looked at the linguistic and stylistic features in the extract that could be seen to demonstrate the presentation of different viewpoints at different points in the scene. Because these indicators at times involve individual lexical items or clauses, rather than prolonged sections of text, combinations of, or changes in viewpoint often occur within the same sentence and, as a result, it is sometimes difficult to make clear distinctions concerning whose perspective is being presented.

Some aspects of the scene can be interpreted as representative of more than one point of view and an example of this is the focus in the narrative on Pym in the first paragraph. This could be viewed as the narrator describing the actions of the scene in a way that highlights Pym's behaviour towards Miss Dubber, or it could be viewed as reflective of Miss Dubber's point of view, noticing how Pym is behaving and comparing this with his "usual" behaviour.

Another aspect of the scene that could be attributed to either the narrator's or Miss Dubber's point of view, reflecting the limited understanding of Miss Dubber but, whilst doing so, showing the reader that there is more to be inferred from the situation than Miss Dubber is able to see, is shown in sentence 7 in the expression, "for no clear reason" and in a further example, "Pym took a moment to laugh" (37). By showing Miss Dubber's viewpoint to be limited through the use of the negated adjective in the first example, and in the second by observing that Pym paused in his reaction but without giving a reason for this, the reader could be led to make assumptions about the reasons for this behaviour. So in the first

example, the connection between Pym smiling and Miss Dubber talking, can lead to the inference that he is amused by her. The second, which comes after Miss Dubber has joked that Pym wants to “get rid” of her because he is keen for her to take a cruise, leads the reader to infer that she has discovered Pym’s real motivation without actually realising it. By presenting Miss Dubber’s view as limited, the narrator allows the reader to see that there is more to what is being said than is explicitly presented.

The complexity of the style of viewpoint presentation in this extract has highlighted some of the problems raised in the discussion in section 2 of the taxonomy of narration developed by Fowler. Making a distinction between internal and external narration may lead this extract to be classed as the latter, as there are few explicit indicators of the characters’ internal points of view. However, this would result in a more simplistic account of the viewpoint effects in the extract being provided, overlooking the effects brought about through the less direct indicators of character viewpoint. In addition, using such broad categories to classify types of narrators would not allow for a precise account of the different possible interpretations of the same linguistic indicators.

The analysis has also demonstrated that along with more direct features, such as the pattern of pronouns in the first paragraph, or the repeated instances of adverbs of frequency, inferences also contribute significantly to the point of view effects in the extract. However, Fowler does not seem to place importance on this feature as an indicator of viewpoint in his framework. These inferences can be drawn from the actual content reported, such as the example discussed above, “Pym took a moment to laugh” (37), or from choices made by the narrator regarding how something is presented – such as the summarizing of Miss Dubber’s speech as her “latest news”, leading to the inference that the exact content is not important.

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