

CHAPTER 3

A method of analysis and some examples

This chapter has the practical purpose of showing how the apparatus of linguistic description can be used in analysing the style of a prose text. We take for granted the principles that have been argued in Chapters 1 and 2. We also take for granted a set of linguistic categories which will be more or less common knowledge to those who have a basic familiarity with the workings of the English language, whether in literary or non-literary contexts. One particular area in which technical terms are likely to cause some problems is that of grammar, and here we follow the terminology and general view of grammar presented in Greenbaum and Quirk's *A Student's Grammar of the English Language* and many other grammars using a similar framework.¹ Another area is that of foregrounding, where we draw on the terminology of traditional poetics ('metaphor', 'metonymy', 'onomatopoeia', etc.). Although many of these terms are widely current in literary scholarship, we presuppose a linguistic account of these phenomena, and for this purpose, it is convenient to refer the reader to Leech's *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry*.² Following the list of categories in section 3.1, explanations of selected points will be added in section 3.2.

Every analysis of style, in our terms, is an attempt to find the artistic principles underlying a writer's choice of language. All writers, and for that matter, all texts, have individual qualities. Therefore the features which call themselves to our attention in one text will not necessarily be important in another text by the same or a different author. There is no infallible technique for selecting what is significant. We have to make ourselves newly aware, for each text, of the artistic effect of the whole, and the way linguistic details fit into this whole.

Nevertheless, it is useful to have a checklist of features which may or may not be significant in a given text. For this reason, the following list of

questions has been prepared. The answers to these questions will give a range of data which may be examined in relation to the literary effect of each passage. We stress that the list serves a heuristic purpose: it enables us to collect data on a fairly systematic basis. It is not exhaustive, of course, but is rather a list of 'good bets': categories which, in our experience, are likely to yield stylistically relevant information. The stylistic values associated with the linguistic data must be largely taken on trust at present; in subsequent chapters, we endeavour to show how these values, too, can be studied systematically.

3.1 A checklist of linguistic and stylistic categories

The categories are placed under four general headings: lexical categories, grammatical categories, figures of speech, and cohesion and context. Semantic categories are not listed separately, since, as suggested in section 2.9, it is easier to arrive at these through other categories; for example, we use our lexical categories to find out how choice of words involves various types of meaning. Since the purpose of the list is heuristic, there is no harm in mixing categories in this way. It is also in the nature of things that categories will overlap, so that the same feature may well be noted under different headings.

A: Lexical categories

[For notes (i–xiv) on the categories see pp. 66–7]

- 1 **GENERAL.** Is the vocabulary simple or complex⁽ⁱ⁾? formal or colloquial? descriptive or evaluative? general or specific? How far does the writer make use of the emotive and other associations of words, as opposed to their referential meaning? Does the text contain idiomatic phrases or notable collocations⁽ⁱⁱ⁾, and if so, with what kind of dialect or register⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾ are these idioms or collocations associated? Is there any use of rare or specialised vocabulary? Are any particular morphological categories noteworthy (e.g. compound words, words with particular suffixes)? To what semantic fields do words belong?
- 2 **NOUNS.** Are the nouns abstract or concrete? What kinds of abstract nouns occur (e.g. nouns referring to events, perceptions, processes, moral qualities, social qualities)? What use is made of proper names? Collective nouns?
- 3 **ADJECTIVES.** Are the adjectives frequent? To what kinds of attribute do adjectives refer? Physical? Psychological? Visual? Auditory? Colour? Referential? Emotive? Evaluative? etc. Are adjectives restrictive or non-restrictive? Gradable or non-gradable? Attributive or predicative?

- 4 VERBS. Do the verbs carry an important part of the meaning? Are they stative (referring to states) or dynamic (referring to actions, events, etc.)? Do they 'refer' to movements, physical acts, speech acts, psychological states or activities, perceptions, etc.? Are they transitive, intransitive, linking (intensive), etc.? Are they factive or non-factive^(iv)?
- 5 ADVERBS. Are adverbs frequent? What semantic functions do they perform (manner, place, direction, time, degree, etc.)? Is there any significant use of sentence adverbs (conjuncts such as *so, therefore, however*; disjuncts such as *certainly, obviously, frankly*)^(v)?

B: Grammatical categories

- 1 SENTENCE TYPES. Does the author use only statements (declarative sentences), or do questions, commands, exclamations or minor sentence types (such as sentences with no verb) also occur in the text? If these other types appear, what is their function?
- 2 SENTENCE COMPLEXITY. Do sentences on the whole have a simple or a complex structure? What is the average sentence length (in number of words)? What is the ratio of dependent to independent clauses? Does complexity vary strikingly from one sentence to another? Is complexity mainly due to (i) coordination, (ii) subordination, or (iii) parataxis (juxtaposition of clauses or other equivalent structures)? In what parts of a sentence does complexity tend to occur? For instance, is there any notable occurrence of anticipatory structure (e.g. of complex subjects preceding the verbs, of dependent clauses preceding the subject of a main clause)^(vi)?
- 3 CLAUSE TYPES. What types of dependent clause are favoured: relative clauses, adverbial clauses, different types of nominal clauses (*that*-clauses, *wh*-clauses, etc.)? Are reduced or non-finite clauses commonly used and, if so, of what type are they (infinitive clauses, *-ing* clauses, *-ed* clauses, verbless clauses)^(vii)?
- 4 CLAUSE STRUCTURE. Is there anything significant about clause elements (e.g. frequency of objects, complements, adverbials; of transitive or intransitive verb constructions)^(viii)? Are there any unusual orderings (initial adverbials, fronting of object or complement, etc.)? Do special kinds of clause construction occur (such as those with preparatory *it* or *there*)?
- 5 NOUN PHRASES. Are they relatively simple or complex? Where does the complexity lie (in premodification by adjectives, nouns, etc., or in postmodification by prepositional phrases, relative clauses, etc.)? Note occurrence of listings (e.g. sequences of adjectives), coordination or apposition.
- 6 VERB PHRASES. Are there any significant departures from the use of the simple past tense? For example, notice occurrences and functions of the present tense; of the progressive aspect (e.g. *was lying*); of the perfective

aspect (e.g. *has/had appeared*); of modal auxiliaries (e.g. *can, must, would*, etc.). Look out for phrasal verbs and how they are used.

- 7 OTHER PHRASE TYPES. Is there anything to be said about other phrase types: prepositional phrases, adverb phrases, adjective phrases?
- 8 WORD CLASSES. Having already considered major or lexical word classes, we may here consider minor word classes ('function words'): prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns, determiners, auxiliaries, interjections. Are particular words of these types used for particular effect (e.g. the definite or indefinite article; first person pronouns *I, we*, etc.; demonstratives such as *this* and *that*; negative words such as *not, nothing, no*)^(ix)?
- 9 GENERAL. Note here whether any general types of grammatical construction are used to special effect; e.g. comparative or superlative constructions; coordinative or listing constructions; parenthetical constructions; appended or interpolated structures such as occur in casual speech. Do lists and coordinations (e.g. lists of nouns) tend to occur with two, three or more than three members? Do the coordinations, unlike the standard construction with one conjunction (*sun, moon and stars*), tend to omit conjunctions (*sun, moon, stars*) or have more than one conjunction (*sun and moon and stars*)?

C: Figures of speech, etc.

Here we consider the incidence of features which are foregrounded (see section 1.4) by virtue of departing in some way from general norms of communication by means of the language code; for example, exploitation of regularities of formal patterning, or of deviations from the linguistic code. For identifying such features, the traditional figures of speech (schemes and tropes) are often useful categories.

- 1 GRAMMATICAL AND LEXICAL. Are there any cases of formal and structural repetition (anaphora, parallelism, etc.) or of mirror-image patterns (chiasmus)? Is the rhetorical effect of these one of antithesis, reinforcement, climax, anticlimax, etc.^(x)?
- 2 PHONOLOGICAL SCHEMES. Are there any phonological patterns of rhyme, alliteration, assonance, etc.? Are there any salient rhythmical patterns? Do vowel and consonant sounds pattern or cluster in particular ways? How do these phonological features interact with meaning^(xi)?
- 3 TROPES. Are there any obvious violations of, or departures from, the linguistic code? For example, are there any neologisms (such as *Americanly*)? Deviant lexical collocations (such as *portentous infants*)? Semantic, syntactic, phonological, or graphological deviations? Such deviations (although they can occur in everyday speech and writing) will often be the clue to special interpretations associated with traditional poetic figures of speech such as metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche,

paradox and irony^(xii). If such tropes occur, what kind of special interpretation is involved (e.g. metaphors can be classified as personifying, animising, concretising, synaesthetic, etc.)? Because of its close connection with metaphor, simile may also be considered here. Does the text contain any similes, or similar constructions (e.g. 'as if' constructions)? What dissimilar semantic fields are related through simile?

D: Context and cohesion

Finally, we take a preliminary look at features which will be more fully dealt with in Chapters 7 to 10. Under COHESION, ways in which one part of a text is linked to another are considered: for example, the ways in which sentences are connected. This is the internal organisation of the text. Under CONTEXT (see the discussion of discourse situation in section 8.1) we consider the external relations of a text or a part of a text, seeing it as a discourse presupposing a social relation between its participants (author and reader; character and character, etc.), and a sharing by participants of knowledge and assumptions.

- 1 COHESION^(xiii). Does the text contain logical or other links between sentences (e.g. coordinating conjunctions, or linking adverbials)? Or does it tend to rely on implicit connections of meaning?

What sort of use is made of cross-reference by pronouns (*she, it, they, etc.*)? by substitute forms (*do, so, etc.*), or ellipsis? Alternatively, is any use made of elegant variation – the avoidance of repetition by the substitution of a descriptive phrase (as, for example, 'the old lawyer' or 'her uncle' may substitute for the repetition of an earlier 'Mr Jones')?

Are meaning connections reinforced by repetition of words and phrases, or by repeatedly using words from the same semantic field?

- 2 CONTEXT. Does the writer address the reader directly, or through the words or thoughts of some fictional character? What linguistic clues (e.g. first-person pronouns *I, me, my, mine*) are there of the addresser–addressee relationship? What attitude does the author imply towards his or her subject? If a character's words or thoughts are represented, is this done by direct quotation (direct speech), or by some other method (e.g. indirect speech, free indirect speech)^(xiv)? Are there significant changes of style according to who is supposedly speaking or thinking the words on the page?

3.2 Notes on the categories

- (i) In a formal sense, word complexity should be measured by counting morphemes. For example, *un-friend-li-ness* contains four morphemes,

and *war* only one. But determining the number of morphemes in a word can be a problem, especially with words of foreign or classical origin, such as *signification*. For this reason, counting the number of syllables per word is a more convenient measure of complexity. Morphemic complexity and syllabic complexity are in gross terms reasonably equivalent; but they are not necessarily equivalent for individual words; for example, *six-th-s* contains three morphemes, but only one syllable; *establish*, on the other hand, contains only one morpheme, but three syllables.

- (ii) An idiom may be roughly defined as a sequence of two or more words, the meaning of which is not predictable from the meanings of the constituent words; e.g. *get by, as it were, under the weather*. A collocation is a combination of words, which may be habitual (e.g. *blue sea*) or contrary to expectation (e.g. *mad sea*).
- (iii) REGISTER is the term commonly used for language variation of a non-dialectal type; e.g. differences between polite and familiar language; spoken and written language; scientific, religious, legal language, etc.
- (iv) On the classification of verbs in terms of their relation to other elements in the clause, see Greenbaum and Quirk (1990), sections 10.1–10.18 and 16.11–16.37. This aspect of lexical choice is closely bound up with semantic relations between noun phrases in the clause: these have been investigated by Fillmore³ under the heading of ‘case’, and by Halliday⁴ under the heading of ‘transitivity’. Their role in style is discussed in section 6.1. Factive verbs presuppose the truth of what is being asserted (e.g. ‘Mary *liked* the show’). Counterfactives presuppose the negation of what is asserted (e.g. ‘Mary *pretended* to like the show’) and nonfactives leave the question of truth open (e.g. ‘I *believe* that Mary liked the show’).
- (v) The traditional classification of adverbs and adverbials into adverbs of time, place, manner, frequency, etc. is serviceable enough; a more thorough and systematic classification of adverbs is given in Greenbaum and Quirk (1990) Chapters 7 and 8, where a major distinction is made between adjuncts, disjuncts and conjuncts.
- (vi) The delaying of the main ‘information point’ of a sentence by anticipatory and parenthetical structure is discussed further in section 7.5. This is the defining feature of the traditional rhetorical category of ‘periodic’ sentence, often contrasted with the ‘loose’ sentence.
- (vii) We follow a common practice in treating as clauses what are traditionally called participial, gerund and infinitive constructions; for example ‘*Eating people is wrong*’, ‘a woman *destined for greatness*’, ‘I’m sorry *to hear it*’. These are all regarded as non-finite clauses (see Greenbaum and Quirk (1990) especially sections 14.3–14.5).
- (viii) See note (iv) above, and Greenbaum and Quirk (1990) sections 10.1–10.18, on clause elements.

- (ix) Of course, the same word form may occur in more than one word class. For example, *that* is a determiner (specifically, a demonstrative determiner) in '*That* day nothing happened', a pronoun in 'I know *that*', and a conjunction in 'I know *that* he's wrong'. In English, the overlap between the pronoun and determiner classes, for instance, is very striking. (See Greenbaum and Quirk (1990), sections 5.3–5.10 and Chapter 6.)
- (x) A linguistic reinterpretation of the traditional distinction between schemes and tropes is given in Leech (1969), section 5.1. Schemes are defined as 'foregrounded repetitions of expression', and tropes as 'foregrounded irregularities of content'. Various kinds of scheme, corresponding to traditional figures of speech such as 'anaphora' and 'antithesis' are discussed in Leech (1969), Chapters 4 and 5.
- (xi) The auditory aspect of prose writing should not be neglected, and forms part of the larger topic of iconicity or mimesis in language (see section 7.7). For an introductory classification and discussion of auditory effects in poetry, see Leech (1969), Chapter 6.
- (xii) Once again, reference may conveniently be made to the treatment of these figures of speech (paradox, metaphor, irony, etc.) in Leech (1969), Chapters 8–10.
- (xiii) Some aspects of cohesion are discussed and illustrated in section 7.8. Sentence connection is treated in Greenbaum and Quirk (1990), Chapter 19. For a more extended analysis of cohesion in English, see Halliday and Hasan (1976).
- (xiv) The topic of speech and thought presentation is developed in Chapter 10.

3.3 Joseph Conrad: example 1

In the remainder of this chapter we apply the categories in section 3.1 selectively to three texts which are comparable both in length and in that each is the opening passage of a short story. Our three authors are Conrad, Lawrence and James. The procedure in each case will be to begin with some general first impression of the passage, and then to make selective use of the checklist in order to bring to readers' attention what appear to be the most significant style markers of each. These style markers, in turn, will be related to other style markers within the context of the passage's literary function. In section 3.7, we give a table of quantitative data (Table 3.1) from these three passages, so that our analysis can be seen to be based on 'hard evidence'. Cross-references to this appendix are given by *italic* numbers (e.g. 16).

From Joseph Conrad, *The Secret Sharer*:

On my right hand there were lines of fishing-stakes resembling a mysterious system of half-submerged bamboo fences, incomprehensible in

its division of the domain of tropical fishes, and crazy of aspect as if abandoned forever by some nomad tribe of fishermen now gone to the other end of the ocean; for there was no sign of human habitation as far as the eye could reach (1). To the left a group of barren islets, suggesting ruins of stone walls, towers and block houses, had its foundations set in a blue sea that itself looked solid, so still and stable did it lie below my feet; even the track of light from the westering sun shone smoothly, without that animated glitter which tells of an imperceptible ripple (2). And when I turned my head to take a parting glance at the tug which had just left us anchored outside the bar, I saw the straight line of the flat shore joined to the stable sea, edge to edge, with a perfect and unmarked closeness, in one levelled floor half brown, half blue under the enormous dome of the sky (3). Corresponding in their insignificance to the islets of the sea, two small clumps of trees, one on each side of the only fault in the impeccable joint, marked the mouth of the river Meinam we had just left on the first preparatory stage of our homeward journey; and, far back on the inland level, a larger and loftier mass, the grove surrounding the great Paknam pagoda, was the only thing on which the eye could rest from the vain task of exploring the monotonous sweep of the horizon (4). Here and there gleams as of a few scattered pieces of silver marked the windings of the great river; and on the nearest of them, just within the bar, the tug steaming right into the land became lost to my sight, hull and funnel and masts, as though the impassive earth had swallowed her up without an effort, without a tremor (5). My eye followed the light cloud of her smoke, now here, now there, above the plain, according to the devious curves of the stream, but always fainter and farther away, till I lost it at last behind the mitre-shaped hill of the great pagoda (6). And then I was left alone with my ship, anchored at the head of the Gulf of Siam (7).

Our first impression of this passage is of a meticulously detailed setting of the scene for the story. The description is clearly etched, so that we can reconstruct, in our mind's eye, the whole topography. But more than this, we have a vivid sense of the loneliness of the human observer, set apart from his surroundings, and of 'a mind energetically stretching to subdue a dazzling experience *outside* the self, in a way that has innumerable counterparts elsewhere in Conrad'.⁵

A: Lexical features

Nouns

As a physical description, we expect the passage to contain a large number of physical, concrete nouns (*stakes, bamboo, fences, fishermen, ruins*, etc.) but what is more striking is that these concrete nouns are matched by nouns

which are more abstract in one way or another. Significantly, these tend to occur as heads of major noun phrases ('lines of . . . stakes', 'system of . . . fences'), so that concreteness is subordinated to abstraction (20, 21).

First, we may notice that almost half the concrete nouns refer to general topographical features which, as it were, divide the field of vision into geographical areas and points of focus: *domain, ocean, islets, sea, shore, sky, river, earth, cloud, gulf*, etc. Also contributing to this effect are what may be called 'abstract locative' nouns, indicating geometrical features: *lines, division, end, track, head, line, edge, joint, sweep, curves*, etc. All these nouns refer to objects of vision: the other senses are excluded. Perhaps this is one reason why the observer seems to stand apart from the scene he experiences.

General

Other comments on lexis cut across word class divisions.

It is important to note that we are given not simply a description of a scene, but an account of the relation between the visual world and its observer, who strives to comprehend and interpret it. This relational emphasis is found in the repetition of the word *eye* itself, in abstract nouns implying perception (*aspect, sign, glitter, ripple, glance*, etc.), and in verbs such as *see, mark*, and *look*. The passage is concerned not only with objects of perception, but with the process of perceiving them; the occurrence of first-person pronouns (over half of the personal pronouns are of this type) is a symptom of this (37).

On the other hand, Conrad avoids using verbs with a human agent. The 'eye', as if with a will of its own, becomes the subject-agent in 'as far as *the eye could reach*' (1), '*My eye followed* the light cloud' (6), 'the only thing on which *the eye could rest*' (4). The only example of an agentive verb with a human subject is 'I turned my head' (3). Other verbs which could involve agency are deprived of their active meaning by being used in the passive participle form: *abandoned, anchored* (55); whereas stative verbs are quite frequent: *resembling, looked, lie, shone, marked*, etc. (22). The general feeling is that the narrator, although acutely alive to his environment, is detached and powerless in the face of its immensity.

Another, related, tendency is in the occurrence of adjectives which express strangeness or lack of definition, often by the use of negatives: *half-submerged, mysterious, incomprehensible, unmarked, devious*. To these may be added other negative expressions such as *insignificance, no sign, without a tremor*. Other adjectives, such as *still, monotonous, stable*, also have a negative element of meaning ('not moving', 'not varied', 'not easily moved') stressing the uncanny featurelessness of the scene. These contrast with a few words which suggest a faint potential disturbance of the underlying calmness: *animated, glitter, gleams, ripple*. There is a congruity between the eye to which things are 'imperceptible' and the mind to which things are 'incomprehensible'.

B: Grammatical features

Sentence length

It is perhaps significant, in this opening paragraph, that the sentences move to a peak of length in sentence (4), and thence slope down to the final brevity of (7). (The progression of sentence lengths in words is: 66 – 59 – 61 – 88 – 61 – 44 – 18.) The effect of placing the short sentence at the end is powerful: whereas other sentences relate the setting to the observer, this one relates the observer to his setting, and thereby summarises what has been implied in the rest of the paragraph. Since this sentence explains the context for what precedes, we might think it more natural to place it (deprived of the connecting words ‘And then’) at the beginning of the paragraph. But in that case the expression ‘I was alone’ would have been banal: it is only after we have *felt* the isolation of the speaker in all its particularity, and have seen the last vestige of human life disappear over the horizon, that we can understand the force of the simple statement.

Sentence structure

Sentences (1)–(6) are all quite complex, and have a certain similarity of structure. All except (6) have an introductory adverbial clause or phrase providing a point of orientation before we launch into a main clause. From here, each sentence is elaborated by coordination and subordination – by progressive elaboration of ‘trailing constituents’ (see sections 7.5.3–7.5.4), as if to imitate the movement from the observer’s eye towards the distance. Sentence (1) illustrates this characteristic ‘reaching out’ effect. ‘On my right hand’ establishes the observer as the point of reference. This sentence structure then develops as set out in Figure 3.1.

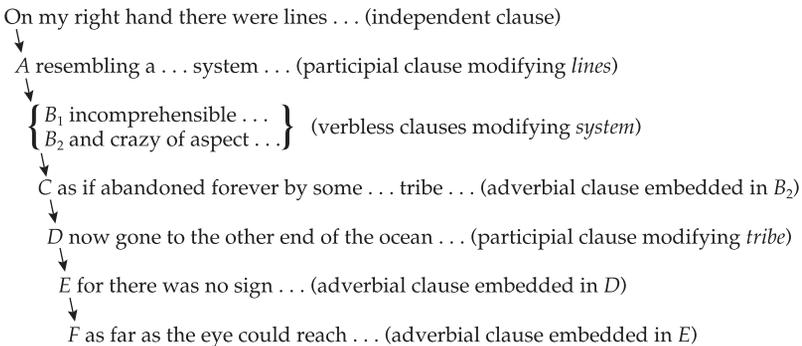


Figure 3.1

Note: The sentence is structurally ambiguous in certain respects, but the above analysis is the one which appears to match the sense. For instance, *E* is shown as subordinate to *D*, because ‘for there was no sign . . .’ provides a reason for imagining that the tribe of fishermen have ‘gone to the other end of the ocean’.

Figure 3.1 shows six degrees of subordination (A–F), each representing, as it were, a further step away from the starting point towards the remotest horizon, and even beyond (for the observer’s imagination takes him ‘to the other end of the ocean’). Accompanying this progressive distancing, there is a distancing from graspable reality, an increasing emphasis on what cannot be known or explained: ‘resembling . . . mysterious . . . incomprehensible . . . crazy of aspect as if abandoned . . . no sign . . .’. Other sentences have a similar type of structure, and tend to end in a similar evocation of vastness and remoteness, as the eye reaches its limit of vision: ‘under the enormous dome of the sky’; ‘the monotonous sweep of the horizon’; ‘as if the impassive earth had swallowed her up without an effort, without a tremor’; ‘till I lost it at last behind the mitre-shaped hill of the great pagoda’.

Prepositions

The passage has an unusually large number of prepositions (9), particularly prepositions of place and direction, such as *on* and *to*, and the preposition *of* (40). In fact, a large part of the syntactic complexity of the sentence comes from the use of prepositional phrases. The role of *of*, in particular, is to relate two noun-expressions together, and the former of these expressions is always an abstract noun – if we include as ‘abstract’ geometrical and topographical nouns like ‘the straight *line* of the flat shore’, ‘the devious *curves* of the stream’ – and collective nouns such as ‘a *group* of barren islets’, ‘two small *clumps* of trees’. What this suggests is that perception and cognition go hand in hand (as indeed they do in modern psychological theories): the eye does not passively record objects in the raw, but structures and schematises them in cognitively coded groupings. For Conrad, this is as it should be: that *see* means both to perceive and to comprehend is more than an accident of metaphor. In his struggle with the alien and threatening ‘beyondness’, a man must faithfully use his full sensibility, in which his senses and his understanding are indissolubly joined.

C: Figures of speech etc.

Quasi-simile

Although Conrad does not use conventional similes of the kind ‘X is like Y’, he uses a range of constructions which express or imply similitude: ‘resembling some mysterious system . . .’ (1), ‘as if abandoned for ever.’ (1), ‘suggesting ruins of stone walls . . .’ (2), ‘looked solid . . .’ (2), ‘Corresponding in their insignificance’ (4), ‘as of a few scattered pieces of silver . . .’ (5), ‘as though the impassive earth had swallowed her up . . .’ (5), ‘mitre-shaped’ (6). Unlike orthodox similes, a number of these constructions suggest an ‘explanation’ which we know is not true. These, coupled with the element

of mystery and unfathomability, strengthen the impression of a mind stretched to explore and understand. Again, the eye's exploration of the panorama is not inert, but active and imaginative: 'looking at' something means grasping what it 'looks like'.

Metaphor

This analogising faculty is also revealed through metaphor. The feeling that the vista, for all its peacefulness, is disquieting, comes to us partly through two diverse types of metaphor: the 'civilising' metaphor which allows islands (already compared to man-made buildings) to have *foundations* (2), the sea to be *stable* (3), the sea and land to constitute a *floor* (3), and the sky a *dome* (3). Such metaphors indicate an unreal calm, because they render the immensities of nature in terms of things which are familiar, solid and manmade. In contrast, other metaphors make reference to an animacy which seems to threaten by its very absence. Except for that of the tug being 'swallowed up', these metaphors are expressed through modifying adjectives. They are therefore subdued, and scarcely noticeable to a casual reader: the '*animated* glitter' (2), the '*impassive* earth' (5), the '*devious* curves' (6) (the fact that the earth is impassive, or devoid of feeling, suggests that it has capabilities in that direction). These small hints of life give an uneasy impression that what is apparently so lifeless may have undisclosed resources of power and activity.

Other metaphors are associated with the observer's eye: unlike the observer himself, his eye behaves like an independent agent: it 'reaches' (1), it seeks 'rest' from the 'vain task of exploring' (4), and it 'follows' the cloud of smoke of the tug (6). Although the metaphor whereby perception is equated with movement towards the object perceived is commonplace, the effect of making the eye, rather than the observer himself, the subject of these verbs is to disassociate the observer, as if in contemplative detachment, from the eye, which is restless and energetic. We sense the alienation of the man who experiences his surroundings without participation: even his observations seem to come from some extrinsic impulse.

Schemes

The passage somehow communicates its visual experience not only with intense realisation, but with a sense of wonder. This comes in part from patterns which have an emotively reinforcing effect, particularly pairings of like-sounding words and phrases: '*larger and loftier*' (4), '*without an effort, without a tremor*' (5), '*fainter and farther*' (6). Rhythmic parallelism accompanies the parallelism of grammar. These couplings stress the dominant dimensions of the experience: immensity, stillness, distance. Occasionally consonant and vowel repetitions are employed in a way which lends force to semantic connections: '*solid, so still and stable*' (2), '*sun shone smoothly*' (2). There is onomatopoeia in the alliteration, assonance, and

quickenings rhythm of 'animated glitter'(/ x x x / x) and 'imperceptible ripple' (x x / x x / x). The speeding-up effect is caused partly by the number of unstressed syllables, partly by short vowels, and partly by the brevity of the stop consonants /p/ and /t/. We may contrast these with the broadening, expansive effect of the long vowels and monosyllables in 'enormous dome of the sky' (3). These are not gratuitous embellishments: they integrate into the sound texture of the language the extremes of infinite space and microscopic detail between which the description so remarkably ranges.

D: Cohesion and context

Cohesion

The passage does not make conspicuous use of logical and referential links between sentences: for example, there are no cross-referring demonstratives or linking adverbials, and few third-person pronouns (38). The definite article is sometimes a mark of co-reference: for instance, 'the islets of the sea' (4) refers back to 'a group of barren islets' (2) and 'the great river' (5) refers back to 'the river Meinam' (4). But continuity between the parts of the description depends largely on the observer, whose vantage point is the pivot around which the cycloramic picture unfolds. Thus most sentences begin with a reference, actual or implied, to the first-person narrator: 'On my right hand . . .' (1), 'To the left . . .' (2), 'And when I turned my head . . .' (3), 'My eye followed . . .' (6), 'And then I was left alone . . .' (7). Through this progression, we build up a vista in the round, the lone figure of the narrator at its centre; then, in (4) and (5), the eye focuses on a particular point: the distant river and vanishing tug, whose disappearance from the scene reinforces the narrator's isolation. In the final sentence our attention is abruptly brought back from the remote horizon to the observer himself.

3.4 D.H. Lawrence: example 2

At the beginning of *Odour of Chrysanthemums*, Lawrence's general plan is similar to that of Conrad in *The Secret Sharer*: he presents a setting, following a path of unfolding detail until the scene is evoked in all its particularity, and then moves our attention to focus on the predicament of humanity within that setting. In both cases, humanity – however dissimilar may be the lot of the lonely sea captain from that of the woman who comes 'stooping out of the . . . fowl-house' – seems dwarfed and overwhelmed by the environment. But in other respects these descriptions are strikingly different.

From D.H. Lawrence, *Odour of Chrysanthemums*:

The small locomotive engine, Number 4, came clanking, stumbling down from Selston with seven full waggons (1). It appeared round the corner with loud threats of speed, but the colt that it startled from among the gorse, which still flickered indistinctly in the raw afternoon, outdistanced it at a canter (2). A woman, walking up the railway line to Underwood, drew back into the hedge, held her basket aside, and watched the foot-plate of the engine advancing (3). The trucks thumped heavily past, one by one, with slow inevitable movement, as she stood insignificantly trapped between the jolting black waggons and the hedge; then they curved away towards the coppice where the withered oak leaves dropped noiselessly, while the birds, pulling at the scarlet hips beside the track, made off into the dusk that had already crept into the spinney (4). In the open, the smoke from the engine sank and cleaved to the rough grass (5). The fields were dreary and forsaken, and in the marshy strip that led to the whimsey, a reedy pit-pond, the fowls had already abandoned their run among the alders, to roost in the tarred fowl-house (6). The pit-bank loomed up beyond the pond, flames like red sores licking its ashy sides, in the afternoon's stagnant light (7). Just beyond rose the tapering chimneys and the clumsy black headstocks of Brinsley Colliery (8). The two wheels were spinning fast up against the sky, and the winding-engine rapped out its little spasms (9). The miners were being turned up (10).

The engine whistled as it came into the wide bay of railway lines beside the colliery, where rows of trucks stood in harbour (11).

Miners, single, trailing and in groups, passed like shadows diverging home (12). At the edge of the ribbed level of sidings squat a low cottage, three steps down from the cinder track (13). A large bony vine clutched at the house, as if to claw down the tiled roof (14). Round the bricked yard grew a few wintry primroses (15). Beyond, the long garden sloped down to a bush-covered brook course (16). There were some twiggy apple trees, winter-crack trees, and ragged cabbages (17). Beside the path hung dishevelled pink chrysanthemums, like pink cloths hung on bushes (18). A woman came stooping out of the felt-covered fowl-house, half-way down the garden (19).

A: Lexical features

Nouns

In comparison with the Conrad passage, purely concrete nouns (*engine, wagons, colt, gorse, railway, hedge, basket*, etc.) are here more frequent, and indeed account for more than two-thirds of all nouns. The description is direct and concrete, rather than being abstracted and intellectualised through the act of perception. Abstract nouns, when they occur, often refer to movement and action: *threats, speed, canter, movement, winding, spasms* (20).

Style in Fiction

Verbs

Verbs are far more frequent in this passage (5). Most verbs are dynamic, and many indicate movement: *came, clanking, flickered, licking, trailing, claw, grew*, etc. (24). Even static elements of the landscape have implications of movement: the pit bank 'looms up', the chimneys 'taper', the vine 'clutches'. Verbs which are stative generally have implications of movement, indicating physical position or posture: *held, stood, cleaved, squat, hung*, etc. Auditory verbs are used for mechanical activities: *clanking, thumped, rapped, whistled*.

The number of intransitive verbs is very striking (28). Since intransitive verbs do not specify, as transitive verbs usually do, a cause-effect relationship, the impression we get is that movement is divorced from purpose: all the strident activity of the industrial scene seems to be self-generating and uncontrolled.

Adjectives

To accompany the auditory imagery of verbs, the adjectives bring visual imagery, particularly of colour (30): *red, scarlet* and *pink* contrast vividly with *black, tarred* and *ashy*, bringing into relief small signs of light or life against the drab and blighted background. Another notable grouping of adjectives, this time morphologically defined, consists of adjectives ending in *-y*: *marshy, reedy, ashy, dreary, clumsy, wintry, twiggy*. Such adjectives belong to the popular, rather than learned, stratum of English vocabulary and tend to have emotive connotations, here largely pejorative. They tie in with the large number of adjectives which emphasise ugliness and torpor: *raw, rough, ragged, forsaken, stagnant, dishevelled*, etc. Adjectives underline the theme of lifelessness: *wintry, bony, ashy* and *stagnant* all connote death in their various spheres of meaning.

Adverbs

The largest group of adverbs is that of place, and especially direction (32): *down, back, aside, away, up, behind*. These tend to combine with verbs to emphasise movement and activity ('stumbling down', 'walking up', 'drew back', etc.). There are also four manner adverbs in *-ly*: *indistinctly, heavily, insignificantly* and *noiselessly*. Other adverbs, especially *still* and *already*, refer to time, emphasising the premature nightfall, which, with its increase of gloom, colours the passage with despondency.

General

In comparison with Conrad, Lawrence uses relatively simple, homely, common-core Anglo-Saxon vocabulary. Rare words like *whimsey* and *winter-crack* do occur, but they are of the kind one may suppose to have local dialect currency. In this respect, they may be linked with other 'local' words like *coppice* and *spinney*. In addition, Lawrence exploits emotive associations, not only in his choice of words, but in the way he combines them.

In juxtapositions such as *large bony vine, clumsy black headstocks, dishevelled pink chrysanthemums*, the associations of adjectives seem to interact, so that, for example, *pink* is given a tawdry overtone by its neighbour *dishevelled*.

B: Grammatical features

Sentence complexity

The average sentence lengths of the two passages are fifty-seven words for Conrad, and only twenty for Lawrence (3); in Conrad the ratio of independent clauses to dependent clauses is 1:2.8, and in Lawrence 1:1 (46). Lawrence, then, uses much simpler sentences than Conrad, especially in his third paragraph. Much of what complexity there is occurs in the adverbials specifying place, direction, etc. (32, 40, 63), and in the noun phrases, descriptively loaded with pre-modifying adjectives (57). (Contrast Conrad's heavily post-modified noun phrases.) We may note an almost obligatory use of adjective modifiers in the third paragraph: 'Round the *bricked* yard grew a few *wintry* primroses. . . . Beyond, the *long* garden sloped down to a *bush-covered* brook course. There were some *twiggy* apple trees, *winter-crack* trees, and *ragged* cabbages.'

At the end of the first paragraph, the sudden brevity of the sentence 'The miners were being turned up' has an effect comparable to that of Conrad's final sentence. The sentence summarises and interprets a setting which up to now we have seen more or less as detached onlookers: by using the language which the locals themselves might use ('being turned up'), it invites us to become humanly involved, to see ourselves as insiders.

Word classes

It is noteworthy that major word classes ('content words') account for a high percentage of the total number of words (58 per cent, as compared with 52 per cent in the Conrad passage, and 47 per cent in the James passage). For example, Lawrence makes little use of pronouns, conjunctions, and auxiliaries; and whereas in the Conrad passage the preposition *of* occurs twenty-nine times (out of 397 words in all), in this one it occurs only seven times (out of 377 words). Perhaps these are symptoms of the greater concreteness of Lawrence's description: he makes his nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs work for him without weaving them into an abstract web of relationships. Thus where Conrad talks of 'a clump of trees', separating the shape from the substance, Lawrence simply talks of 'coppices' and 'spinneys'; where Conrad refers to a 'tribe of fishermen', Lawrence is content to refer to 'miners'. This is undoubtedly one of the factors that make Lawrence's style seem easier and more accessible than Conrad's.

C: Figures of speech etc.

Schemes

Lawrence does not neglect sound effects in impressing on us the harsh sensory qualities of the industrial scene. He makes use of verbs which are intrinsically onomatopoeic, such as *clanking*, *thumped* and *rapped*, as well as words which are phonaesthetic in a less direct sense, such as *stumbling* and *clumsy*, *clutch* and *claw*, in which the similarities of sound connote similarities of meaning.⁶ In the description of the train, regularities of rhythm ('clánking, stúmbing dówn fròm Sélstón', 'óne bý óne, with slów inévitable móvémént') are interspersed with the clogging effect of juxtaposed heavily stressed syllables ('lóud thréats of spéed', 'The trúcks thúmped héavily pást'), to which consonant clusters add vehement emphasis: /θrets/, /spi:d/, /trʌks/, /θʌmpt/, /pa:st/. Elsewhere, the short vowel /æ/ combines with repeated stop consonants to intensify hard, uncompromising features of the landscape: 'jolting black waggons', 'black headstocks', 'rapped out its spasms'. 'twiggy apple trees', 'ragged cabbages'.

Metaphor and simile

Metaphor and simile serve to animate and humanise what is inanimate: the engine 'stumbles', the headstocks are 'clumsy', the winding engine has 'spasms', the cottage 'squats'. The humanoid vigour of manmade things, as suggested by these metaphors, is at the same time ungainly and unnatural. It is also charged, like the 'looming' pit bank, with menace: 'loud threats of speed', 'flames like red sores licking its ashy sides'. In the third paragraph, these same qualities are transferred to nature, as if it has been contaminated: the 'bony vine' 'claws and clutches' at the house. At the same time, nature is given the lifeless and blighted quality of man's world: 'ragged cabbages' and 'dishevelled chrysanthemums' are odd collocations because *ragged* normally applies to clothes, and *dishevelled* to hair. Actions are as if self-initiated by inanimates: this is seen in the large number of inanimate subjects of verbs of motion and activity. Industry seems to have become a driving force of strident activity, against which background human beings, the miners, are 'like shadows'. The dominant effects of the animation of the lifeless, and the dehumanisation of man, combine with the more obvious symbolism of the woman 'insignificantly trapped' by the train, and the woman 'stooping out of' the fowl house.

D: Cohesion and context

Lexical repetition

Perhaps the most notable feature of cohesion in the passage is lexical repetition of various kinds (65). Typically, Lawrence makes use of the reinforcing effect of repetition in cases like 'pink chrysanthemums like pink cloths' (18).

Definite article

We have noticed that Lawrence uses few pronouns, and to some extent the definite article may be seen as an alternative device of cross-reference, less ambiguous, because it is accompanied by a noun identifying a previous reference. Thus 'the engine' in (3), (5) and (11) refers back to the engine introduced in (1); 'the house' in (14) refers back to the low cottage introduced in (13). But this alone does not account for the remarkable frequency of *the* in the extract (fifty-one instances, (42)), because even on their first mention, features of the scene are generally introduced by *the*. The passage begins, for instance, with 'the small locomotive engine' rather than 'a small locomotive engine'. Since the function of *the* is to identify something which is contextually known to be unique, it tends to signal continuity on a contextual, rather than textual, level: Lawrence makes a pretence of shared knowledge with the reader, who by implication is already familiar with the surroundings, is already an inhabitant of the fictional world. There is nothing unusual about this in itself: using *the* as an aspect of *in medias res* technique (see section 5.5.2) is commonplace, and we find one or two examples in the Conrad passage (e.g. 'the tug', (5)). But Lawrence's pervasive use of *the* is exceptional, extending even to 'the colt', and to insignificant topographical details such as 'the marshy strip that led to the whimsey' (6). But it is noticeable that on all three occasions when human beings are brought on the scene, they are introduced by indefinite noun phrases: 'a woman' (3), 'miners' (12), and 'a woman' (19). This makes them stand out as new and unfamiliar against the industrial background, as if they are somehow out of place.

Other contextual features

This use of the definite article is part of a more general strategy of sympathetically involving the reader. We have seen other examples in the local flavour of words like *whimsey*, and phrases like 'being turned up'. Yet another is the use of numbers and names: the locomotive in the very first sentence is named as 'Number 4', it comes 'from Selston', and it draws 'seven full waggons'. No one but a native would consider such details, uninformative to the outsider, as worthy of note. So, by suggestion, Lawrence invites us to become members of the mining community, and to share the lot of the shadowy miners and the stooping housewife. The third-person narration of Lawrence is paradoxically more humanly subjective than the first-person narration of Conrad. In *The Secret Sharer*, the narrator-reader relationship is objectified by the use of 'I', so that we feel the observer as being a separate identity from ourselves, however much we may be invited to share his vision. But in the Lawrence passage, there is no such intermediary to deflect us from direct participation in the fictional world.

3.5 Henry James: example 3

The opening passage of Henry James's *The Pupil* resembles the preceding extract in its *in medias res* technique, but in other respects one could scarcely find two more dissimilar beginnings to a story. James raises the curtain on his tragi-comedy of social relations in the middle of a conversation – in fact, in the middle of a rather uncomfortable interview between two strangers. Many differences of language between this and the other passages can be attributed to different subject matter: James is concerned with a world of human values and relationships, and the external universe of nature has no part to play in it. At the same time, we are able to identify features of style which belong not so much to the subject as to James's characteristic way of handling it.

From Henry James, *The Pupil*:

The poor young man hesitated and procrastinated: it cost him such an effort to broach the subject of terms, to speak of money to a person who spoke only of feelings and, as it were, of the aristocracy (1). Yet he was unwilling to take leave, treating his engagement as settled, without some more conventional glance in that direction than he could find an opening for in the manner of the large, affable lady who sat there drawing a pair of soiled *gants de Suède* through a fat, jewelled hand and, at once pressing and gliding, repeated over and over everything but the thing he would have liked to hear (2). He would have liked to hear the figure of his salary; but just as he was nervously about to sound that note the little boy came back – the little boy Mrs Moreen had sent out of the room to fetch her fan (3). He came back without the fan, only with the casual observation that he couldn't find it (4). As he dropped this cynical confession he looked straight and hard at the candidate for the honour of taking his education in hand (5). This personage reflected, somewhat grimly, that the first thing he should have to teach his little charge would be to appear to address himself to his mother when he spoke to her – especially not to make her such an improper answer as that (6).

When Mrs Moreen bethought herself of this pretext for getting rid of their companion, Pemberton supposed it was precisely to approach the delicate subject of his remuneration (7). But it had been only to say some things about her son which it was better that a boy of eleven shouldn't catch (8). They were extravagantly to his advantage, save when she lowered her voice to sigh, tapping her left side familiarly: 'And all overclouded by *this*, you know – all at the mercy of a weakness – !' (9) Pemberton gathered that the weakness was in the region of the heart (10). He had known the poor child was not robust: this was the basis on which he had been invited to treat, through an English lady, an Oxford

acquaintance, then at Nice, who happened to know both his needs and those of the amiable American family looking out for something really superior in the way of a resident tutor (11).

A: Lexical features

Nouns

In comparison with the other two passages, this one has a rather low frequency of nouns (4); moreover, over half of these nouns are abstract (20), referring to entities which exist on a social or psychological plane: *effort*, *subject*, *terms*, *money*, *feelings* and *aristocracy* all occur in the first sentence.

Adjectives

Similarly, James makes sparse use of adjectives (6), and, of those that occur, many have nothing to do with physical attributes: *unwilling*, *conventional*, *affable*, *casual*, *cynical*, etc.

Verbs

In contrast, verbs are particularly frequent in the passage (5); but this does not mean that it is full of action. The copula occurs as frequently as twelve times (out of sixty-five main verbs), and other categories of verb which are prominent include those denoting attitudes (*hesitated*, *liked*, *treating*, etc.), cognitions (*known*, *supposed*, *reflected*, etc.), speech acts (*speak*, *repeated*, *address*, *invited*, etc.), and perceptions (*hear*, *looked*, *appear*, etc.).

Adverbs

The most notable classes of adverb are those of manner (*straight*, *nervously*, *familiarly*, etc.) and of degree (*somewhat*, *precisely*, *extravagantly*, etc.), together with focusing adverbs such as *only* and *even* (34–36).

General

In contrast to Lawrence's simpler and more homely vocabulary, James seems to prefer rather more formal Latinate terms: *procrastinated*, *reflected*, *remuneration*, *observation*, *confession*, etc. It is easy to find more simple language in which the same ideas might have been expressed in a more humdrum context: *delay* for *procrastinate*, for example, or *pay* for *remuneration*. The loftier tone of these words blends with a certain tendency to affectation (the gallicism *gants de Suède*), and to euphemism (payment is referred to by *terms* and *remuneration*, the child's ill-health is glossed over in the noun *weakness* and the negative phrase 'not robust'). There is also a tendency towards circumlocution, particularly in combinations of a verb with an abstract object, as in 'take leave', 'sound that note', and 'dropped the cynical confession'. But mingled with these linguistic mannerisms are colloquial turns of phrase like 'getting rid of' and 'shouldn't catch'.

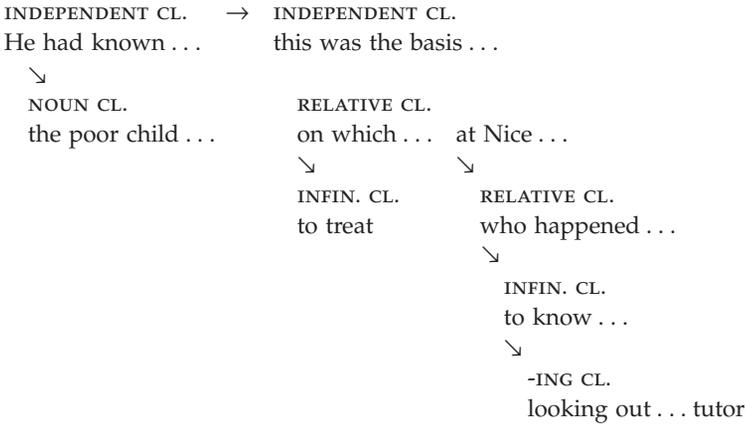
James exploits the associative meaning of words, but in a different way from Lawrence. In his choice of words such as *aristocracy*, *cynical*, *honour*, *improper* and *acquaintance*, it is the social connotations which are important. For example, the adjectives *affable* and *amiable* which describe Mrs Moreen and her family refer to a superficial benignity of manner, rather than to the more solid social qualities which would be suggested by such Anglo-Saxon equivalents as *friendly* and *kind-hearted*.

B: Grammatical features

Sentence structure

James's sentences in this passage are on the average much shorter than those of Conrad (35 words per sentence). At the same time, the impression is that James's syntax is more involved. This may be caused to some extent by the general abstractness of the language, but it is also a matter of the kinds of syntactic presentation and complexity that James favours:

- (i) Just as he seems to avoid calling a spade a spade, so James seems to avoid putting first things first. He tends to mention antecedent events after subsequent ones, and causes after effects. The two longest sentences in the passage, (2) and (11), show this clearly. In (2), the independent clause begins 'He was unwilling to *take leave* . . .', the phrase 'take leave' indicating the end of a meeting with another person: but neither the identity of the other person nor the nature of the meeting has yet been revealed. Only later in the sentence is his interlocutor described; even here, though, the description is limited to her outward appearance and behaviour: 'the large affable lady . . . to hear'. Further enlightenment is delayed until (11), which at last explains how the interview came to take place at all; but again, this information is postponed to the end of the main clause, in the relative clause 'on which he had been invited . . .' which in turn contains a further relative clause 'who happened to know . . . resident tutor'. Here we are told for the first time such details as that the Moreens are American, that they require a resident tutor for their sickly child, and that Pemberton is looking for the tutor's job; or rather, we are not told, but are led to infer these facts, for James avoids a direct statement of them.
- (ii) The sequence in which pieces of information are released is only part of what is odd about this way of putting things. It is also to be noted that the factual antecedent information is backgrounded by being placed in a subordinate positions in these sentences (see section 7.5.1). The following is a skeleton diagram of the clause structure of (11), and we note that the progressive embedding of one clause in another follows the *retrogressive* path of Pemberton's mind reconstructing the sources of his present predicament:



(iii) The occurrence of anticipatory structure (see section 7.5.4) is another source of difficulty in James's syntax. This sometimes takes the form of one or more anticipatory subordinate clauses before the verb of the main (superordinate) clause, as in this section of (2): 'and, *at once pressing and gliding*, repeated over and over . . .' The common occurrence of parenthetic structures can also be noted: 'somewhat grimly' (6); 'tapping her left side familiarly' (9); 'then at Nice' (11). Anticipatory and parenthetical structures increase difficulty because they require the reader's mind to store up syntactic information which it will use later on (see sections 7.5.3–7.5.4). A similar processing difficulty is caused by relative and comparative clauses in which the introductory word (*who, which, than*, etc.) has an embedded syntactic function; for example in (8): 'some things about her son [which it was better that a boy of eleven shouldn't catch]'. Although *which* occurs at the head of the relative clause, its syntactic function is actually as object of the verb (*catch*) of the *that* clause which is *subordinate* to the relative clause. Therefore we cannot make syntactic sense of *which* until we get to the end of the sentence.

These apparent perversities of James's syntax become meaningful in the light of an appraisal of his particular concern with psychological realism: his unremitting endeavour to pin down the psychological moment 'in the full complexity of its circumambient conditions'.⁷ The passage has virtually no narrative progression: indeed, it begins more or less at the end of the interview. We are introduced to Pemberton at the point where he is screwing up the courage to say something about money, and all that happens in the subsequent two paragraphs is that the boy returns and his effort is frustrated. In between times, a whole psychological scenario is elaborated, in which we piece together the flavour of his anxiety about the pay, his

disappointment at not getting the information out of the lady, his interpretation of what she is like (inferred from her appearance, actions and conversation), his assessment of her son, his misunderstanding of the son's errand, and his recollection of how he came to be involved in the interview. In the vague reference to 'his needs' in the last sentence we even get a glimpse of why the question of money is so important for him. The progression is determined largely not by time sequence, but by other connections. James grapples with this insuperable problem: that whereas for the human sensibility one moment holds a myriad of simultaneous conditions and possibilities, for the writer and reader one thing must come after another. Although he cannot escape from the linearity of language (see sections 7.2 and 7.5.3), James does the next best thing, which is to fasten our attention initially on the most immediate feature of Pemberton's predicament: his uncomfortable sense of indecision, and then to expatiate on it so that by the time we have threaded our way through two paragraphs, we have built up a sensitive grasp of the coexisting intricacies and ironies of that predicament (the ironies will concern us in section C below). Thus progression means not so much going from before to after, as from the more immediate to the more remote circumstances which impinge on the central character's consciousness.

It is for this reason that James's style here is more expository than narrative. An important part of the technique is delay of clarification, for immediate clarification, in the nature of things, cannot be supplied without oversimplification. When James begins with the simple statement 'The poor young man hesitated and procrastinated', he begs such questions as: Who was the young man? Why was he hesitating and procrastinating? Where was he? And the answers to those questions will in turn beg further questions, as we apprehend more and more of the situation (see sections 5.2 and 5.5.2). It is necessary for the reader's initiation into James's world for us to hold our convictions in suspense, i.e. we should be aware that more things are hidden than have yet been shown. In this, the role of delaying syntax is to postpone the interpretation of one structure until another has been taken in, so that they ultimately make sense as a whole rather than in sequence.

Subordinate clauses

By one measure, James's syntax is more complex than Conrad's: his ratio of dependent clauses to independent clauses is over 3:1 (46). A large proportion of his dependent clauses are in fact noun clauses which complement verbs (49, 53); such clauses are entirely absent from the Conrad and Lawrence passages. They are either finite *that* clauses (although the conjunction *that* may be omitted: 'He had known [that] *the poor child was not robust*' (11)); or else infinitive clauses ('He would have liked *to hear the figure of his salary*' (3)). The frequency of such clauses is not surprising, since

they express some proposition or thought which is related, by the main clause, to the person experiencing it. These constructions are the stuff of James's psychological elaboration, since he is concerned not so much with the relation between persons and persons, or between persons and things, as between persons and psychological states and events. The use of infinitive clauses is particularly remarkable: James has thirteen of these, whereas Conrad and Lawrence have only three between them. Since infinitive clauses are generally non-factive, this indicates how much of James's psychological web is woven out of possibilities and hypotheses, rather than known facts.

Verb phrases

A factor related to the above is the relatively high incidence of complex verbs phrases in the extract (59–62): unlike the other two writers, James makes substantial use of modal and aspectual auxiliaries in such phrases as 'would be', 'shouldn't catch', 'could find', 'Would have liked', 'had been invited', 'had been'. These involve awareness not only of a narrative point of time, but of circumstances which, in relation to that point, are past, future or hypothetical. Such auxiliaries are rare in the Conrad and Lawrence passages. In James they are a further indication of the ramifications of consciousness: past memories, future expectations and hypothetical suppositions are as much implicated in the would-be tutor's predicament as what is happening at the time.

Negatives

In commenting on James's use of negation, Watt raises the philosophical point that 'there are no negatives in nature, but only in the human consciousness'.⁸ We may go further, and affirm that a negative is used, generally speaking, when there is a need to deny some expectation (in the mind of author, reader, character) that the positive is true. In other words, a negative cancels the expectation of its positive. Hence negation can be a device for irony and comedy, as is amply shown in this passage. The negative particle *not* occurs four times (twice in its suffixed form *n't*), but more important are instances of implied negation: *only* ('no more than, nothing else than') occurs three times, *without* twice, and there are in addition the negative prefixes of *unwilling*, *improper*, and the words *but* (2), *save* (9) expressing exception.

From one point of view, this passage portrays a comedy of disappointed expectations, and the subtlety of it comes from the fact that not only Pemberton's expectations are in question, but those of Mrs Moreen and her son, as interpreted predominantly through the mind of Pemberton. It is partly by following the intimations of the negatives that we feel the pressure of his own expectations and of the expectations that Mrs Moreen seems to have with regard to him.

C: Figures of speech etc.

Irony

We look in vain for strikingly deviant or schematic uses of language in James. His method is rather to suggest ambivalences of meaning by subtle deviations from expectation. There are one or two mild metaphors and parallelisms, but these tend to serve the purpose of irony (see 8.4–8.5), which is the overarching figure of speech in this passage. For example, Mrs Moreen's remark 'And all overclouded by this, you know – all at the mercy of a weakness' (9) has the anaphoric repetition of *all* at the beginning of successive clauses, and has two banal colloquial metaphors in the expressions 'overclouded' and 'at the mercy of'. These rhetorical features seem, however, to suffer from being at odds with the rest of the passage, as if James wants us to catch in them a certain false emotionalism in the tone of the speaker. This impression is backed up by the following sentence, which stands out as being the shortest and most straightforward sentence in the extract:

Pemberton gathered that the weakness was in the region of the heart (10).

We must assume that this sentence is meant ironically because it says nothing other than what can be inferred from the preceding sentence: Pemberton registers this completely obvious fact, the location of the illness, from Mrs Moreen's somewhat overdramatised confidentiality.

The irony is primarily at the expense of Mrs Moreen (a lady less refined than she would like to appear), and secondarily at the expense of Pemberton (whom we smile at and with over his impotence to get at the information he wants). Irony is perhaps too harsh a word for an incongruous and humorous awareness that things are not as they seem, for either of these characters. But whatever we call it, this sense that words do not just have their face-value meaning, but are to be critically interpreted as indicators of tone and attitude, is an essential part of James's technique.

Other ironic signals are:

- (i) *negation*: The double negative '*unwilling . . . without . . .*' (2), for example, suggests a contrast between the willingness that seems to be expected of Pemberton and the reluctance that his own circumstances force upon him.
- (ii) *collocations*: There is an associative incongruity in the way words are combined in such phrases as: 'fat jewelled hand' and 'soiled *gants de Suède*'. The unappealing qualities *fat* and *soiled* influence their more agreeable neighbours *jewelled* and *gants de Suède*, which by contamination come to seem pretentious. This kind of incongruous juxtaposition is one technique which James shares with Lawrence.

- (iii) *disparities of register and tone*: We have already noted euphemisms, gentelisms and circumlocutions, where the choice of locution seems too inflated for the occasion. Subtle mixing of tone points to an ironic interpretation of these phrases: for instance, the preciousness of *bethought herself* contrasts oddly with the colloquial bluntness of *getting rid of* in 'When Mrs Moreen *bethought herself* of this pretext for *getting rid of* their companion' (7); and in the final clause of the passage, the colloquial 'looking out for' foregrounds the specious gentility of 'something really superior in the way of a resident tutor'.

D: Cohesion and context

Elegant variation

James's partiality for elegant variation (69) is well illustrated in the passage, particularly in the way he varies the manner of referring to the three characters. In the first paragraph, Pemberton is referred to as 'the poor young man' (1), 'the candidate for the honour of taking his education in hand' (5) and 'this personage' (6), as well as by the standard devices of name and pronoun. Similarly, Mrs Moreen is called 'a person who spoke only of feeling and, as it were, of the aristocracy' (1), 'the large, affable lady who sat there . . . liked to hear' (2), and 'his mother' (6). Moreen Junior becomes 'the little boy' (3), 'his little charge' (6), 'their companion' (7), 'her son' (8), 'the poor child' (11). Clearly such references are not merely long-winded substitutes for a name: they draw attention now to this, now to that, aspect of the same person, and so build up a many-sided picture of each character. Thus the boy is seen at one point in relation to Pemberton ('his little charge'), at another in relation to Mrs Moreen ('her son'), and at another in relation to both ('their companion'). These viewpoints are complementary, and form part of the multidimensional awareness which James's style fosters. In this context, elegant variation lends itself to irony. The rather pompous periphrasis 'the candidate for the honour of taking his education in hand' doubtless represents the boy's self-centred view of Pemberton, but in language quite above the boy's apparently limited powers of expression: what it seems to express is Pemberton's image of himself as he sees it reflected through the mind of the child. Similarly, 'this personage', a mock-dignified label for Pemberton himself, perhaps fits the rather forbidding image he presents to the child, as well as reflecting sadly on Pemberton's own lack of dignity in the situation in which he finds himself.

Co-reference generally

James is careful in making co-referential links between one sentence and another, as he unravels step by step the complications of the situation. The types of sentence connection used are various. Sentence (3) takes up the

content of its predecessor by repeating the whole phrase 'he would have liked to hear'; (10) repeats the word *weakness* from (9); in (5), 'this cynical confession' refers, in different words, to the 'casual observation' just mentioned in (4). The demonstratives *this* and *that* occur eight times in a connective function ('sounds *that* note' (3), '*this* pretext' (7), etc.), and personal pronouns are also heavily used (66–68). Prominent, too, is the use of adversative connections: *yet* in (2), *but* in (3) and (8). These, like the negative forms, indicate the conflict between expectation and fact.

All these features of cohesion indicate the author's concern with the interrelatedness of individual circumstances within a complex psychological whole. But here, too, he employs the strategy of delaying clarification. Sentence (2) leaves us in mid-air, guessing what the 'thing' may be that Pemberton 'would like to hear'; (3) provides the answer, but only in part. Sentence (10) tells us of a 'weakness' of the 'heart', but not until (11), where this matter is taken up again in the expression 'the poor child was not robust', do we learn that it provided a reason for the present interview: it was for this reason (we surmise) that the Moreens wished to engage a resident tutor.

The same strategy is at work in elegant variation. The introduction of characters' names is strangely delayed – but this is accountable if we consider that names have a low priority in the elaboration of psychological reality: if James had begun his first sentence: 'Pemberton hesitated and procrastinated', he would have succeeded in giving his main character a label, and nothing else. The son is introduced first, uninformatively, as 'the little boy', as if that is the only appellation that characterises Pemberton's immediate awareness. This is immediately expanded to 'the little boy Mrs Moreen had sent out of the room to fetch her fan' – again, a point of immediate situational relevance, but involving a step from the present into the recent past. Later we find Pemberton speculating about his future role with respect to 'his little charge', but at that stage we can only guess what this role will be. Later still, the boy is acknowledged to be Mrs Moreen's 'son', but that he is the prospective 'pupil' in the story's title is a fact that James does not bring into the open until the end of the passage. Thus throughout a reading of the passage, we are learning some things, and surmising others. The task the reader is set is rather like that of completing a jigsaw puzzle, where we are given a few pieces at a time, and have to keep guessing what the rest of the picture will be like. The technique may be a taxing one for us as readers, but it ensures that in seizing on details, we do not lose sight of the ramifications of the whole.

Context

The passage is almost entirely in third-person narration. There is a little direct speech ('And all overclouded by this, you know...') and indirect

speech ('the casual observation that he couldn't find it'), but otherwise there are no clear signals to countermand the assumption that we are reading an impersonal narrator's version of events.

On the other hand, it is intuitively obvious that at least for most of the passage we are inside Pemberton's consciousness. This comes in part from the use of indirect thought (see section 10.2) constructions (with *that* clauses or infinitive clauses as complements). These express the content of Pemberton's inner consciousness: 'Pemberton gathered that the weakness was in the region of the heart' (10); 'he would have liked to hear the figure of his salary' (3). Elsewhere Pemberton's status as 'reflector' (see pp. 139–40) is evident in the assertion of statements which no one but he would be in a position to verify: 'it cost him such an effort to broach the subject of terms'. But there are occasions when this is not so clear. For example, the opening clause, without further context, could be seen as another person's view of Pemberton, derived from observation of his behaviour: 'The poor young man hesitated and procrastinated', but from what follows this is less likely. More obviously, in (7), we appear to have an inside view of Mrs Moreen: 'When Mrs Moreen bethought herself of this pretext . . .'. With subsequent context, however, even this can be interpreted as mediated through the mind of Pemberton, who after all is able to draw his own conclusions from Mrs Moreen's fairly obvious strategy of ridding them of the boy's company. So all in all, since most of the passage is told from Pemberton's point of view, we are led in the absence of contrary evidence into taking the whole passage in that light. This demonstration illustrates a characteristic ambivalence of point of view in James's writing: although one character is evidently the 'centre of consciousness', there are times when we seem to have an outside view of him, or an inside view of another character. But, to add a further twist, even these shifts of point of view are reconcilable with a unitary consciousness, for they may be interpreted as the main character's sense of what others are thinking and feeling.

Such ambivalence makes shifts of register suggestive, for they tend to imply that we are listening to this or that person's manner of speaking, and to shift point of view accordingly. Colloquialism is a useful clue. The qualification 'as it were' in (1) suggests Pemberton's own inner voice; 'that he couldn't find it' in (4) suggests the boy's peremptory style of speech; 'something really superior in the way of a resident tutor' (11) suggests the Moreens' way of expressing their requirements in the style of genteel private advertisements. On other occasions we detect language which can only be that of James, the third-person narrator. The opening phrase 'The poor young man' is significant in this respect: since it can hardly be treated as Pemberton's own self-pitying assessment of himself, it must be taken as the author's narrative voice; and thus establishes, from the beginning, a relation between the author and the main character which is at the same time sympathetic and distanced.

Shifts of register therefore work with other indications of point of view to give a multidimensional sense of situation. There are insights into different characters, but one character has the privileged position of 'centre of consciousness', and the author does not relinquish his controlling position as third-person narrator.

3.6 Conclusion

In analysing these three passages in terms of a selection of their stylistic features, we have no doubt lost a great deal by isolating them from their literary context. We have also, by dividing our observations into different linguistic categories, separated things which from the literary point of view should be brought together. But through cross-connections between one section and another, there has emerged a common literary focus on which linguistic features of widely differing kinds seem to converge. In Conrad, for example, the focus lies in the sense of individual man vividly exploring and seeking to comprehend the elusive data of his alien environment. In Lawrence, it is natural man that we see threatened by the meretricious energy of his industrial environment, which renders nature lifeless and artificial. In James, it is civilised, social man negotiating and experiencing a world of irreducible ambivalence and complexity. All three writers deal with a haunting problem which humanity faces in coming to terms with its lot. But these abstract generalisations are facile and reductive, as are all such abstractions. The discovery that varied aspects of a writer's style point towards a common literary purpose is something that can only be demonstrated through the details of stylistic analysis. And this discovery of unity in diversity, by which stylistic analysis is ultimately justified, cannot be abstracted or summarised.

3.7 Quantitative appendix

Our final task in this chapter is to bring together, for reference, a selection of the quantitative data by which the stylistic analysis of our three passages is supported. In Table 3.1 the figures for the three extracts by Conrad, Lawrence and James are set side by side, so that there is some standard of comparison, some 'relative norm', however limited (see section 2.4), for judging the significant properties of each text. For external comparison, we give in the right-hand column of the table a comparable figure (where available) derived from a fairly representative sample of modern English.⁹

Of course the table, like the preceding stylistic analyses, has to be selective. Since the passages are of approximately the same length, it has

not been felt necessary to give percentages in those parts of the table where numbers are small. Moreover, we have included only three of the four sections of our checklist presented in section 3.1 (see pp. 61–4). The section on figures of speech, in the nature of things, deals with stylistic features which cannot be precisely quantified. The same is true, to a lesser extent, of many of the categories included in the table, particularly categories such as ‘Verbs of motion’ and ‘Evaluative/Emotive adjectives’ which involve judgments of meaning. Although the criteria may be unclear, they have been applied impartially to the three extracts and, to this extent, the figures may be taken as a reliable guide.

The letters (a), (b), (c) etc. in the table refer to the explanatory notes preceding the table. The asterisked entries are those which show significant differences between the passages according to the chi-square test of statistical significance.¹⁰

Explanatory notes (*Table 3.1*)

- (a) (18) There is some discrepancy between the number of orthographic words (see 1) and the number of syntactic words: for example, we count *couldn't* as two syntactic words (modal auxiliary + negative particle), but *a few* as one syntactic word (determiner).
- (b) (19–43) This part of the table breaks down word classes into subclasses such as ‘human nouns’. The subclasses are not exhaustive, and their incidence should be compared with that of the general word classes (4–16) to which they belong. The categories selected are, in the main, those which illustrate obvious contrasts between the extracts.
- (c) (25) We include under ‘psychological verbs’ verbs of feeling (*liked*), thought (*supposed*), and perception (*hear*).
- (d) (32) Adverbs of location include those referring to position (*here*) and direction (*home*).
- (e) (33) Adverbs of time include not only adverbs of ‘time when’ such as *then*, but adverbs of duration and frequency such as *always*.
- (f) (45) Dependent clauses include both finite clauses (48–52) and non-finite clauses (53–56). We break down finite clauses into functional categories (adverbial clause, relative clause, etc.), and non-finite clauses into formal categories (infinitive, verbless, etc.).
- (g) (57–58) These figures are percentages of the total nouns in each sample (4). They thus indicate the frequency with which nouns are pre- and post-modified, which is a rough measure of complexity in noun phrases.
- (h) (62) Under ‘passive voice’ we include instances of the passive (or *-ed*) participle (*anchored*, *abandoned*, etc.).
- (j) (65) Our count of ‘lexical repetition’ registers second and subsequent occurrences of words of major word classes.