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The Death of Dorian Gray:
A Stylistic Analysis of the Final Chapter of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Abstract

As his only novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is often seen as Oscar Wilde's masterpiece. Although many critics have discussed its literary themes, few have focused on the ultimate event in Dorian Gray's life – his death. To the best of my knowledge, few stylistic analyses have been conducted on this literary event. In this paper it is investigated how the stylistic devices that Wilde employs in the final chapter of the 1891 edition, chapter 20, affect readers' involvement with the story. In this analysis a comparison will be drawn between a section of the chapter before Dorian's death and a section after it and this comparison will in turn be compared to a survey on readers' involvement. The methodological focus will be on Point of View and Speech and Thought Presentation (following Simpson 1993; Fowler 1996 (2nd ed); Short 1996 and Semino & Short 2004). It will be shown how prior to Dorian's death Wilde describes everything in a way that is close to the main character and far from the outside world. However, after the death, all is described in the fashion of a limited omniscient third narrator that is quite removed from everything. This sudden shift between modes happens precisely at the point when Dorian plunges the knife into the painting and we, as readers, are no longer capable of following Dorian's thoughts or experiences with the same closeness as before.

1 Introduction

Few novels can be said to have inspired such popularity and such outrage as Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*; in fact, it has been reviled so that it took until the 1980s for it to become the subject of more widespread serious academic analyses (Nassaar, 1999), and these analyses have mostly been limited to the field of literary

studies rather than stylistics.

Aside from being highly capable of communicating extraordinary moral ideas through characters such as *Dorian Gray's* Lord Henry Wotton, Oscar Wilde appears throughout this novel to also have been skilled in enhancing the content of his writing by making certain stylistic choices, whether unconscious or conscious. Feeling involved with characters going through a personal crisis does not just depend on content; theoretically, the choice in Point of View and Speech, Writing and Thought Presentation, as well as a host of other stylistic options can achieve just as much, if not more. Els Andringa (1996) writes about this notion that readers may indeed have different reactions to the events of the fictional world and the stylistic features of the story itself; it logically follows that both could reinforce one another. This paper shall limit itself to investigating readers' involvement based on these aforementioned stylistic characteristics, leading to the question of how Speech, Writing & Thought Presentation and Point of View affect readers' involvement with the last chapter of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

First, a small history of the novel itself will be presented, as well as a summary of a number of literary analyses. After this, the actual stylistic analysis of the final chapter shall be discussed. Having then discussed the theoretical side, the more practical topic of the survey that was run shall be touched upon.

2 History and Literary Analyses

Oscar Wilde published his only novel in 1890 in serial form for *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* and in April 1891 as a novel (Ackroyd, 1985: 8). The second edition included six additional chapters, and was subjected to revisions by Wilde himself. Nevertheless, this edition was criticized as much as the first magazine publication. People found it absurd, immoral, shocking, and it took long for many to recognize it as the classic others consider it to be today (Murray, 1981: vii). It has simultaneously also been popular for over a hundred years (Ackroyd, 1985: 15), though perhaps with a different crowd.

In line with Liebman's claims (1999) that the novel was not the subject of academic analyses until the 1980s, even today one would be hard pressed to find more than a handful of discussions, mainly literary analyses. One of the most basic themes traditionally associated with the novel is 'Vanity' and its negative effects, as Dorian's wish to remain as young and good-looking as his picture ultimately leads to his demise.

Throughout Barbara Belford's biography of Wilde, excerpts are offered from *Dorian Gray* to illustrate Wilde's view on matters, such as art and marriage, and she draws a number of parallels between Wilde's life and the novel, even saying that '*Dorian Gray* is very much the author's autobiography' (2000).

Another parallel is drawn by Nassaar, between Dorian's guilt and the weight of the mirror. He draws on instances where the mirror's weight is described, either directly or indirectly – the picture starts out as a light canvas and eventually becomes so heavy it takes two men to drag it up to the attic, where it cannot even be hung on the wall due to its weight; however, after Dorian's death, the servants find the painting hanging exactly on that wall (1999).

Liebman's paper (1999) analyses the novel as being about Dorian's battle for internal harmony. He sees Basil and Henry as personifications of the sides of Dorian's struggle. In this analysis, Basil represents the side of society that mindlessly follows traditional morality, while Henry represents the inquisitive side which proposes a whole new way of considering things. The culmination of this battle within Dorian himself takes place in the last chapter of the novel.

3 Speech, Writing and Thought Presentation

3.1 Methods

The final chapter is, as stated, the chapter in which Dorian Gray argues with himself over the destruction he has caused. Not only has he killed a number of people, such as his two friends Basil Hallward and Alan Campbell, but he has also made the lives of a number of people miserable. He wonders whether he should subject himself to justice. His anger with the painting, which he sees as the source of all his evil, grows until he stabs it. Here Dorian's perspective ends and the actions of the servants and the people in

the street are described by a narrator as they go about finding Dorian's body. For the stylistic analysis, the choice was made to break the chapter into two Parts at this turning point because it appears that the Point of View changes here from limited omniscient, almost first-person perspective to a more unlimited omniscient.

The first Part has been labelled as 'Part I', the second as 'Part II'. In order to analyse this chapter, the clauses have each been tagged and tallied, first for their relevant Speech and Thought Presentation-categories as presented in Mick Short's stylistics textbook *Exploring the Language of Poems, Plays and Prose* (1996: 288 – 320, see tables 1 and 2). Subsequently, these clauses have been checked according to Semino & Short's 2004 revision of the Speech, Writing & Thought Presentation (SW&TP) model. There were also two instances of Direct Writing (DW), which have been counted as Direct Speech/Direct Writing. Both Parts were compared to one another and to the percentages calculated by Semino & Short (2004).

Considering the topic of SW&TP, it must be stated that Short writes that through using SW&TP the narrator filters what gets through to the reader and so regulates how close the reader is to what actually goes on in the narrative (1996: 305 – 306). However, Els Andringa concludes that an increased narrator's interference in the story not necessarily decreases reader involvement, while experienced readers may still appreciate such a story more than one in which such narrator's interference is taken away. In fact, she writes that '[e]motional involvement of [both experienced and inexperienced readers] did not seem to be affected by the specific way of narrating' (1996). In the interpretation of the stylistic analyses, it was decided to stick with the assumption that a narrator's interference is partially indicated by SW&TP, and that it negatively correlates with reader involvement, i.e. that an increase in the narrator's interference decreases reader involvement.

3.2 Part I

<i>Part I</i>	N	NV & NW / NI	NRSA & NRWA / NRTA	IS & IW / IT	FIS & FIW / FIT	DS & DW / DT
Total Clauses (191)	44	16	5	12	102	12
Total Percentage (100)	23.04	8.48	2.62	6.28	53.40	6.28
S & W Clauses (5)	NA	1	1	3	-	-
S & W Percentage (2.62)	NA	0.52	0.52	1.57	-	-
T Clauses (143)	NA	15	4	9	102	12
T Percentage (74.87)	NA	7.85	2.09	4.71	53.40	6.28

Table 1: SW&TP categories for Part I.

As can be gleaned from table 1, the most used category in Part I was Free Indirect Speech & Writing / Thought (FIS & FIW / FIT), which accounted for more than half of the clauses. These are all Free Indirect Thought. The next most important category is N, accounting for almost another quarter. The third biggest is Internal Narration (NI), followed by Direct Thought (DT).

Comparing these percentages to Semino & Short's percentages for pure thought¹ in fiction, 26.68% for FIT, 48.06% for NI and 8.23% for DT (2004: 117, calculated from table 6.2), it can be seen that while the size of the category of DT seems hardly deviant, FIT is substantially larger while NI is substantially smaller. Narration, like DT, is also of fairly similar size, to be specific 23.04% in Part I of the

¹ As opposed to inferred thought (Semino & Short, 2004: 135 – 136), which is not present in this chapter.

final chapter of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and 20.99% for fiction in Semino & Short's corpus (2004: 59, table 3.2). Overall, in this Part, Thought forms a staggering three-quarters of the whole, rather than the 24.40% of the fiction-section of the corpus (2004:59, table 3.2).

It must be taken into account, however, that Short & Semino's fiction-corpus consists of twentieth-century fiction only (2004: 232 – 233), while *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was, as stated, written and published in the early 1890s. Nevertheless, such great differences between percentages could hardly be the result of several decades passing or of coincidence, and as such the relatively large amount of FIT, small amount of NI and the prevalence of Thought over Speech and Writing and over Narration should be considered to be of importance.

Clauses like the following are Narration simply because there is not a trace of Thought or Speech in there.

- (1) As he strolled home, smoking his cigarette, two young men in evening dress passed him.

Two others, (2) and (3), have been categorized as FIT because especially with the question-form of the first clause, the character's phrasing is present but the third person subject and the past tense verb prohibit both from being Direct Thought.

- (2) Was there no hope for him?
 (3) It was nothing to him.

Arguably, (3) could be categorized as Indirect Thought (IT), but especially considering the plausibility of Dorian phrasing it just so to himself but as 'it is nothing to me', considering the absence of a reporting clause, as well as the context of more FIT-clauses, I decided to tag this specific example also as Free Indirect Thought.

Other clauses posed greater challenges, however.

- (4) Basil had painted the portrait that had marred his life.

At first glance (4) appears to be Narration rather than FIT. However, as it is rather Dorian thinking this to himself rather than a narrator telling the reader of this event, this is still FIT, as the reader already knows Basil painted this portrait, if they read all of the book, and also because throughout the book the narrator mainly refers to Basil as 'Basil Hallward' rather than just 'Basil'.

Clauses in longer fragments, such as in the following quote, have been tagged as forms of Speech and Narration, though on a more abstract level these are memories and so, on this more abstract level, are FIT – though they have not been tagged as such – thus further supporting the notion of FIT being the most important category in Part I.

'He had often told the girl whom he had lured to love him that he was poor, and she had believed him. He had told her once that he was wicked, and she had laughed at him and answered that wicked people were always very old and very ugly.'

The clauses in DT are especially short, for example in (5) and (6):

- (5) A new life!
 (6) Never.

As with the second FIT example (3), these – and in fact, a large share of the DT-phrases – were ambiguous as they are mere exclamations and so lack the linguistic markers which led to a categorization of the (2), (3) and (4) as being Free Indirect. This ambiguity, however, should not have any severe consequences as Short characterizes

FIT and therefore by extension also DT as moves towards the character end of the SW&TP scale, from the default of Indirect Thought (1996: 315). This notion is repeated in Semino & Short (2004: 15) and in a later paper by Short (2012), where he writes that '[...] the free indirect category [of thought] represents a move in a different direction from the norm on the thought presentation scale'. This is compared to the norm on the speech presentation scale, which is stated to be Direct Speech.

Statistically the first part is completely dominated by Thought, with little being filtered through the narrator. Short writes the following about the effect of FIT (1996: 315): 'We feel close to the character, almost inside his head as he thinks, and sympathise with his viewpoints', and Short & Semino (2004: 15): 'For example, although free indirect speech has a distancing effect on the reader, [...], its thought presentation counterpart, free indirect thought, usually has the opposite effect, making the reader feel close to the character's thinking process'.

NI was the substantially smaller category in Thought presentation, and considering the notion of IT being the norm, NI would be on the extreme narrator-end of the scale. The fact, then, that in the large number of Thought-presentation clauses NI is underused could furthermore also point towards a focus on character rather than narration.

One hypothesis on Part I is that readers would feel rather close to Dorian, feel involved with what happens to him, and in the survey we will see whether this is indeed the case.

For a final SW&TP characteristic of Part I, consider the second-largest category of Narration. In all Thought being presented the actions of Dorian are an internal deviation. Considering the content of the Narration, it can be seen that the battle raging in Dorian, as described by Liebman, is culminating in Part I; all the Thoughts contain Dorian's doubts, but the stretches of Narration are the actions that truly lead to the climax of the internal battle; Dorian walks home, he picks up a mirror given by Henry and smashes it, he creeps upstairs, he locks the door and looks at the painting, takes up the knife and stabs the painting. These actions are separated from one another by Thoughts, but are the actual steps that lead to Dorian's death.

3.3 Part II

<i>Part II</i>	N	NV & NW / NI	NRSA & NRWA / NRTA	IS & IW / IT	FIS & FIW / FIT	DS & DW / DT
Total Clauses (41)	33	6	-	-	-	2
Total Percentage (100)	80.488	14.63	-	-	-	4.88
S & W Clauses (7)	NA	5	-	-	-	2
S & W Percentage (17.08)	NA	12.20	-	-	-	4.88
T Clauses (1)	NA	1	-	-	-	-
T Percentage (2.44)	NA	2.44	-	-	-	-

Table 2: SW&TP categories for Part II.

The top three categories for Part II, see table 2, cover all of the text instead of only about 85%, which is the case with Part I. About 80% of the entire Part, which consists of 41 clauses, is purely action and description, so Narration. The other two, respectively 12.20% and 4.88%, are in Narrator's Representation of Voice (NV) and in DS.

The prevalence of Narration over Speech, Writing and Thought, is especially large when considering that in Semino & Short, this is only 20.99% (2004: 59, table 3.2); NV is also large when contrasted with the 5.27% of all speech presentation occurrences in Semino & Short's fiction-corpus (2004: 67, calculated from table 4.1), while DS is comparatively small.

The Narration is characterized by sentences as (7) and (8):

(7) There was a cry heard, and a crash.

(8) It was not till they had examined the rings that they recognized who it was.

This part lacks most sorts of Thought presentation, containing mainly Narration and Speech. The Speech is NV, like in (9):

(9) They called out.

In a handful of other instances, like (10), it is Direct:

(10) Whose house is that, constable?

Considering the notion of Direct Speech being the default of Speech, this part appears to be far more neutral, with the inclusion of NV tipping the scale towards the narrator end. The clauses (11) and (12) presented a certain ambiguity, as these could be just as well an unidentified character's sentiments, therefore FIT, as a narrator's imitation of possible character sentiments, perhaps in line with what Ikeo labels as N-FIT (2007).

(11) A splendid portrait of their master [...] in all the wonder of his exquisite youth and beauty.

(12) He was withered, wrinkled and loathsome of visage.

It was eventually decided to label these clauses as simply Narration as there are no further indicators of these being actual character sentiments. Interestingly, the one occurrence of Thought presentation can be found at the end, after examples (11) and (12), when it is described that the servants recognize the dead man – this occurrence is NI, as 'recognizing' is a mental action. As there is no indication of this being inferred

thought (Short & Semino, 2004: 55 – 56), this signals a move towards the characters again.

Finally, sentences like (13) have been marked as NV, much like (9). Although this is not a presentation of an actual speech act, it is rather a marking of the absence of such an act where it would logically be expected. As such it is indeed a Narrator's Representation of Voice – or rather, of the lack thereof.

(13) but there was no reply.

When comparing percentages, it can be seen that Part I is fundamentally different from Part II. Part I focuses far more on Thought while the second Part appears a more objective rendering of what goes on, i.e. appears more observant rather than thoughtful. Following the analysis, it is reasonable to hypothesize that at least based on the Speech, Writing and Thought Presentation, readers should feel more involved with the events of Part I than with those of Part II.

4 Point of View

4.1 Part I

Both Parts have been analysed for Point of View using the categories coined by Fowler (1996) and Simpson (1996), split up as they were before.

When analysing Point of View, Part I would certainly qualify as being an internal according to Fowler (1996: 170), because of the prevalence 'Thought presentation' clauses. The presence of third person pronouns and past tense throughout this novel, chapter and Part would then exclude type A, leaving type B the only possibility, were it not that this Part adheres to the type A-condition of a '*third-person narration* which is strongly coloured with personal markers of the character's world-view, or which includes *Free Indirect* discourse [...]' (Fowler, 1996: 170-171; original italics). The content of the Part furthermore highlights the fact that these are Dorian's thoughts and doubts rather than those of a narrator – therefore, this Part is type A.

Following Simpson's typology (1996), the Point of View falls into Category B, because the third-person pronouns and past tense verbs suggest the presence of a narrator, even if he (or she) is rather invisible. However, considering the Free Indirect though prevalent in this part, thus potentially constructing a sort of 'dual voice' (Bray, 2007), and even having drifted, before the start of this chapter, into 'the confines of a single character's consciousness', this is a Category B in Reflector mode (Simpson, 1996: 55). The fact that Dorian's thoughts and perceptions are being narrated in this part make it a Category B(Reflector) positive; in fact, Simpson gives instances of Free Indirect discourse as illustrations to explain this specific type of Point of View (1996: 69 – 71).

One striking example of this part being told from Dorian's Point of View rather than that of a more omniscient entity lies in the schematic rendering of Dorian's perception of the speech of the two young men also described as example (1). Rather than the reader being informed of these two young men whispering to one another, the reader is told that Dorian hears them do so. Although the notion of embedded SW&TP (Short & Semino, 2004: 171 – 175) was largely ignored in the initial stylistic analysis of the chapter, an attempt was eventually made to distinguish embedded Presentations. These Narrations and Speech/Writing Presentations are mainly situated in either Thought Presentations or in text-sections that are memory-stretches on the aforementioned slightly more abstract level, which points in the direction of these actions and presentations being considered by and filtered through Dorian.

Also interesting about this Part is the fact that Dorian refers to all other characters by either their full name or simply a designation, for instance in the cases of (13) and (14).

(13) He had often told the girl whom he had lured to love him that he was poor.

(14) Nor, indeed, was it the death of Basil Hallward that weighed most upon his mind.

As Dorian referred to these characters by their first name throughout the novel, this change suggests that he feels more distant now. The narrator in fact does consistently refer to characters by their full name throughout the novel; nevertheless, these thoughts being Dorian's maintains the notion of himself feeling distanced from the other characters. Assuming that readers sympathise with Dorian, a further hypothesis is that they would feel more distance between themselves and characters such as the girl and Basil, though perhaps they feel closer to Basil than to the girl. In the event that the reader does not sympathise with Dorian, however, they will still most likely feel closer to Basil, as his name is used, than to the girl.

4.2 Part II

The second Part classifies as Type D according to Fowler (1996: 178), as the lack of Thought Presentation makes it an external narration, and the presence of value-laden expressions, such as in (15) and (16) (*italics in both mine*) mark the presence of the narrator.

(15) *A splendid* portrait of their master [...] in all the wonder of his *exquisite* youth and *beauty*.

(16) He was *withered, wrinkled* and *loathsome* of visage.

As stated in 3.3, these sentences could be construed as being the sentiments of the characters, but there is no indication of this being the case. It rather seems as a narrator's interpretation of the possible thoughts of the characters, which again highlights the presence of the narrator and allows for a qualification of type D.

Following Simpson, the now far more explicit presence of the narrator again makes for a Category B-typing; the more or less 'floating' position of this narrator, as it is outside of the consciousness of any character, makes it a Category B in Narratorial mode; also because the voice of the narrator is, indeed, the only one there – there seems to be hardly any room for a construction of any other voice (1996: 55). 'Exquisite youth and beauty' and similar words, as discussed before, could either be sentiments of the

narrator, or an imitation of sentiments of the characters, as these being actual sentiments of any character is unlikely. 'Exquisite' and 'loathsome' are adjectives expressing evaluations of the relevant nouns – in this case, 'youth' and 'visage' – and therefore, together with the characteristic of the 'floating' narrator, allow Part II to be typed as being B (Narratorial) positive (1996: 62 – 65).

Other examples to back up the notion of the Point of View in Part II being different from the first Part have to do with the social deixis; the servants are referred as though they are familiar; two are mentioned by name, Francis and Old Mrs Leaf. Especially the 'old' in 'Old Mrs Leaf' suggests familiarity. On the other hand, other characters are only referred to by their description; one a policeman, two others gentlemen. Random people in the street were it not that one of them is half-way through the Part described as in (17):

(17) One of them was Sir Henry Ashton's uncle.

This suggests a narrator who no longer invisible in this part and who is closer to the servants than to the three other characters.

4.3 Comparison

For illustration two discourse structures are presented (figures 1 and 2), each responding to one of the Parts. Both have the traditional author-reader and narrator-narratee set-up, though the Point of View analysis of the Part I suggests that these could be collapsed here.

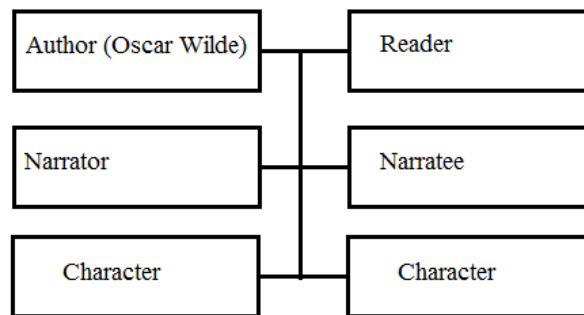


Figure 1: Discourse structure of Part I.

As the DS of the two young men in the beginning have been reported as being heard through Dorian, Dorian was added as a layer; he also acts as a filter when he remembers something someone wrote to him later in the Part, as is the case with the other clauses containing embedded SW&TP. As most of the part consists of Dorian's actions and Thoughts, he will remain alone on this level except for one sentence, in which he orders his servant to go to bed.

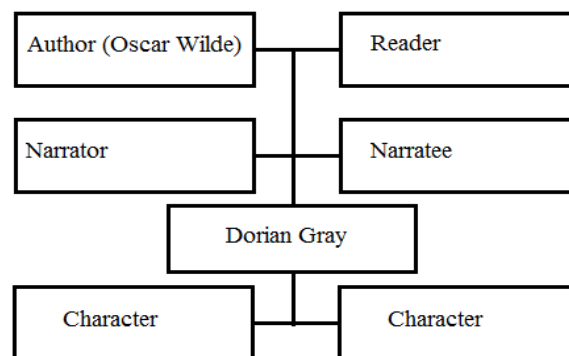


Figure 2: Discourse structure of Part II.

Part II (figure 2) is far simpler; again the traditional set-up of author-reader and narrator-narratee; the presence of the narrator, being closer to the servants, suggests that the narrator and author should not be collapsed, but the reader and narratee can be collapsed. The third layer is fairly regular with the characters interacting with one

another.

The FIT and the absence of a visible narrator in the first Part suggest low narrator interference; readers would feel involved with Dorian, but the social deixis suggests a perceived distance to the other characters in this part. As for the second Part, the absence of any Thought would suggest distance, and the narrator's presence as established via POV analysis could also distance the reader from the narrative, but less so from the servants than from the policeman and gentlemen.

5 Survey

5.1 Hypotheses

The theoretical analysis yielded a number of hypotheses. With regards to SW&TP, one hypothesis was that readers would feel relatively close to Dorian; another was that overall, readers would feel more involved in Part I compared to Part II. Point of View-analysis yielded a further pair of hypotheses, these being that readers would feel distant with regards to Basil and Hetty, and sympathise more with the servants than with the policeman and gentlemen; this analysis furthermore re-enforced the hypotheses of the SW&TP-analysis.

5.2 Methods, Population and Fragments

In order to check these hypotheses, a survey was carried out, asking participants to rate how involved they felt with a character, on a scale from one to five, based on two fragments that they were given. This survey was run twice, because of several issues which came up after the first run; instead of using 'involved', participants were asked how 'close' they felt to a particular character. This was changed as 'close' was reported as not being specific enough. An extra question was furthermore added to the second survey, asking with which character the participants felt most involved; this was asked as an overall comparison, as participants could change their perception of the scale between fragments. The first fragment was especially rich in FIT and contained the full names of two other characters, thus reflecting the most important properties of Part I. The second contained NRA and Direct Speech, as well as the relevant character

designations; unfortunately absent were the value-laden expressions that characterize the narrator's presence. The first fragment was significantly shorter in the first round of the survey, and to eliminate the possibility of 'length' being a relevant variable, the italicized lines were added from the chapter for the second round.

The 50 participants were mostly between 18 and 21 years old, with one participant being 56. Most participants were female, and less than half, only 22, reported having taken (undergraduate) literature, linguistics or stylistics courses. Furthermore, 19 had read the book before. These participants were approached via the social medium of Facebook; they were supplied a link to a website, where they could fill out this survey anonymously. Using Facebook as a method to contact possible participants not only allowed for direct feedback from participants who wished to share their sentiments (and thus not remain anonymous, although their answers still were), but it also formed an efficient way of contacting a large pool of possible participants quickly. Unfortunately, this method also meant that the diversity of the population was limited to the diversity of the social circles of the participants and their 'friended' users as well as mine and my 'friended' users' social circles.

The assumptions were that when there is a clear correlation between theoretical analysis and reader perception, both these characteristics have a clear and definite effect; if there is only a correlation with a number of the hypotheses, only the relevant characteristics have a definite effect, and when there is no correlation there is no effect.

5.3 Results

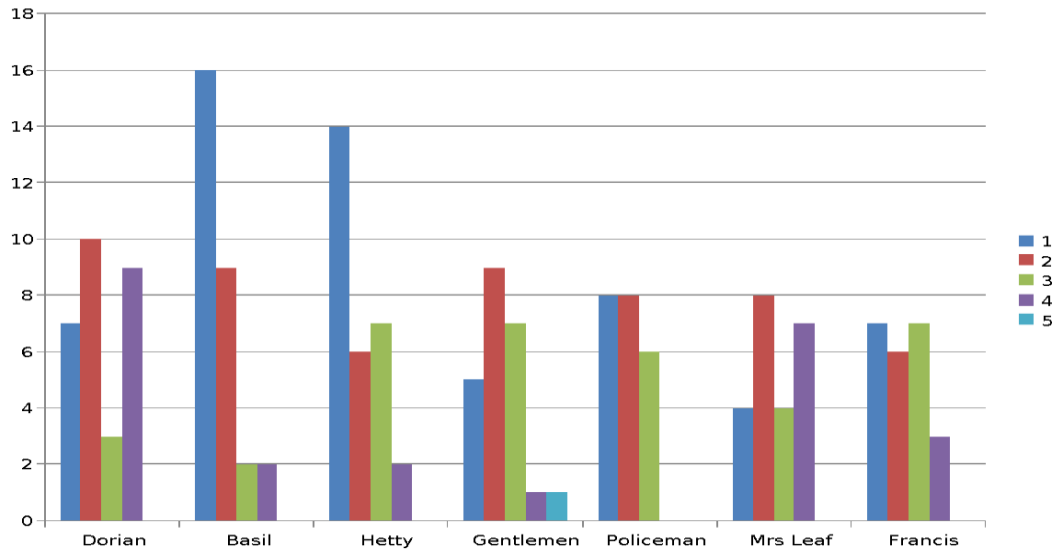


Figure 3: Round 1; Dorian, Basil, Hetty, Gentlemen, Policeman, Mrs Leaf, Francis

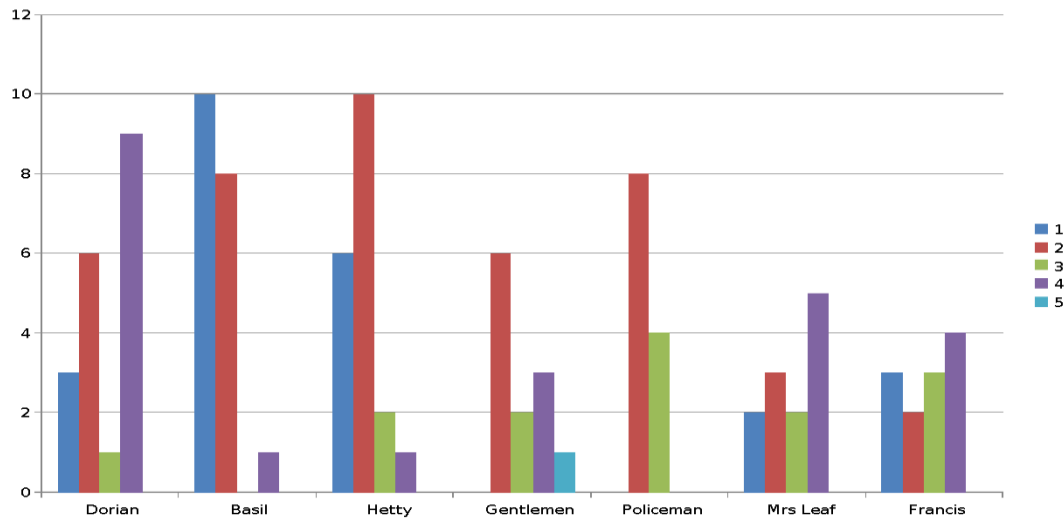


Figure 4: Round 2; Dorian, Basil, Hetty, Gentlemen, Policeman, Mrs Leaf, Francis

As can be gathered from the results of the survey as presented in figures 3 and 4, the second time around the participants seemed to feel more involved with Dorian on average, while they felt less involved with Hetty and Basil. Unexpectedly, they felt more involved with all four other characters in the second Part in the second survey.

The participants overall felt more involved with Dorian than with Hetty and Basil in the first Part. However, opinions on Dorian were divided, with spikes on either side of the scale but little result on 'neutral' – although relatively speaking he still scored averagely in both figures 3 and 4.

Another of the hypotheses was that readers would experience a greater sense of involvement for Part I compared to Part II; however, the distance experienced with regards to Basil and the girl, Hetty, affects the average in such a way that this hypothesis cannot reasonably be accepted or rejected through this questionnaire.

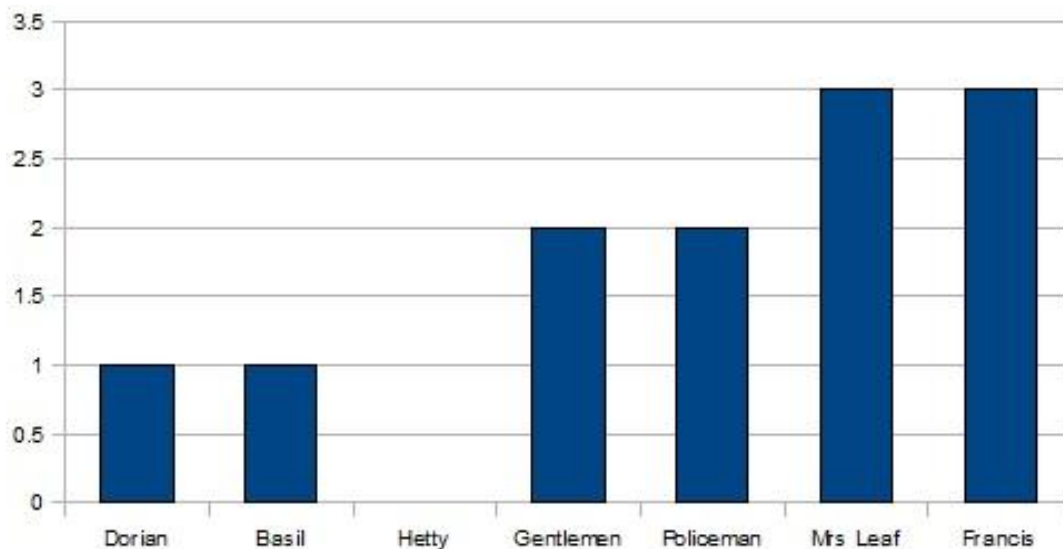


Figure 5: Overall comparison question results.

It was also hypothesized that readers would feel closer to the servants than to the gentlemen and the policeman in Part II, and this proved true. However, when considering the overall comparison question (figure 5), most of the participants felt most involved with the servants, rather than with Dorian. Interestingly, they even felt more involved with the gentlemen and the policeman, and equally with Basil as with

Dorian. Note, however, that the sample size for this question was only 12 and therefore small.

6 Discussion and Conclusion

The theoretical analysis suggested that readers would feel involved with Dorian because of the overall prevalence of Thought presentation, mainly Free Indirect, but would lean towards feeling rather neutral towards the other characters, due to Point of View especially. The readers would feel more involved with the servants than with the others but less than with Dorian. However, the survey suggests that people felt divided with regards to Dorian, and sympathised most with Mrs Leaf and Francis. This could be due to the fact that the narrator's interference through value-laden expression was not as well-represented in the second fragment as it should have been. It could also be due to the fact that the first part contains Dorian's doubts and thoughts about his crimes, whereas the second part is far less 'evil', as it is a far more innocent narrative fragment of people searching for the source of a sound. It could perhaps thirdly also be argued that readers feel ambiguous with regards to from whose perspective the first Part is actually told; the Free Indirect Thought shows Dorian's thoughts, but the third-person pronouns and the past tense verbs still suggest the presence of some narrator, thus perhaps – in the mind of the reader – creating a 'dual voice' (Bray, 2007). Ikeo writes, similarly, that Free Indirect discourse is 'inherently fuzzy in presentation between narration and a character's discourse' (2007). This ambiguity could affect readers' overall involvement with the story, and therefore also Dorian. The divide in responses to Dorian could then indeed partially be explained by Bray's conclusion that the experience of a dual voice differs per reader (2007).

It seems that, to answer the question of how Speech, Writing & Thought Presentation and Point of View affect readers' involvement with the last chapter of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, when it comes to characters whose thoughts and actions do not form a large part of the story, such as is the case with the servants, the gentlemen and the policeman, the stylistic devices of SW&TP and POV seem to have a greater effect than when a character's thoughts and actions are central to the narrative itself. This

should hardly be surprising, considering Andringa's conclusion (1996) that the way a story is written and what the story is affect readers differently; if it is, content-wise, more neutral, it seems that the writing itself has a greater effect.

If anything, this study needs more analyses and surveys, for instance qualitative research in the form of interviews, as well as quantitative surveys in which the content of the chapter remains constant but the STP and POV characteristics change.

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