

Characteristics of Stream of Consciousness from the Anaphoric Perspective

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Abstract: This paper, founded on the Accessibility Theory and the Mental Space Theory, aims to explore how anaphora contributes to reinforcing the features of the stream of consciousness narration by studying the short story *Dill Pickle* by Katherine Mansfield, mainly from the perspectives of dynamic fluidity of consciousness and psychology-orientedness. To begin with, the linear distribution of successive anaphoric expressions indicates not only different levels of accessibility, more importantly, is a static presentation of the dynamic flow of a mental entity in the mental passage of the speaker. However, Mansfield typically employs mental space shift to display the fluidity of consciousness. The shift takes place either between the consciousness of two or more characters or between the different levels of consciousness in one character. Generally, the anaphoric expressions function mainly in the following three situations: a. situations where the antecedent remains salient albeit amid the frequent shift of mental spaces; b. situations where the antecedent becomes ambiguous as two or more elements from a bunch of mental spaces bear similar salience; c. situations where the antecedent, usually in the form of definite noun phrases, is not accessible to the addressee. Given that Mansfield's chief concern is the inner world of the characters, in the latter part of the paper, further exploration is given on the psychological analysis of definite anaphoric descriptions and anaphoric demonstratives. It is found that anaphora does help to enhance the fluidity and vividness of the narration and the use of anaphoric expressions does have weighty implications. Hopefully, this paper could provide an alternative of appreciating the stream of consciousness fictions.

1. Introduction

In the early part of the 20th century, under the influence of Freud's theory of psychological analysis, many writers started their attempt to explore the dynamic processes of the characters' psychological world. Katherine Mansfield is unanimously acknowledged as a pioneer among them. Her works, different from conventional novel creation, have neither intricate plots nor characters with extraordinary personalities. They focus on the trivialities in life, especially the subtle nuance of emotion in the characters.

One of the dominant techniques Mansfield applied skillfully is the stream of consciousness. Mansfield held that, by recording the endless flow of thoughts, perception and feelings which are always fragmental and seemingly unrestrained in the mind of characters, the writer could better reveal the nature of reality and life.

Dill pickle is one of Katherine Mansfield's highly-acclaimed stories. It centers around the scene where the protagonist named Vera and her ex-boyfriend encountered each other at a café after six years of separation. The story involves an enormous amount of recollection and is written from the perspective of the heroine.

Many studies of the novel have been made mainly in terms of personality analysis, feminism, symbolism and narratology, but little has been made from the perspective of anaphora.

As is known, anaphora, as a major cohesive device, is indispensable for textual organization. Although anaphora is not genre-specific, the writer's endeavor to manipulate certain stylistic effects will naturally lead to some distinctive textual features which will be indirectly reflected on the

writer's choice of anaphoric forms.[1]

This paper aims to explore, through a rough study on the short story *Dill Pickle*, how anaphora contributes to representing the characteristics of dynamic fluidity of consciousness and psychology-orientedness in stream of consciousness narration.

2. Theoretical Foundation

2.1. Accessibility Theory

Accessibility, a psychological term put forward by Ariel Mira, refers to the degree of ease with which the speaker retrieves from the working memory a unit of mental entity. Ariel further put forward the Accessibility Marking Scale, classifying anaphoric expressions into low accessibility markers, intermediate accessibility markers and high accessibility markers. Different accessibility markers signal the different levels of efforts to retrieve the mental representation from memory.

Accordingly, a full noun phrase, such as *Donald, the president of the company*, indicates that its referent is currently of low accessibility and takes more cognitive effort to be recovered. Conversely, a high accessibility marker, like a pronoun, is for an entity that is salient in the mind of the addresser typically because the referent has been just mentioned or because it is physically present and perceptible. The addressee thereby relies on the relative degree of accessibility marker provided by the addresser to assess the level of salience of the antecedent and complete the resolution.

For example:

(1) Jane kissed Mary and then *she* kissed Harry.

(2) Jane kissed Mary and then *SHE* kissed Harry.[2]

Compared with the unstressed *she*, the stressed *SHE* denotes a lower accessibility, thus suggesting that the addressee should look for a less accessible antecedent *Mary* to interpret the anaphor *she*.

What's more, Ariel lists four factors that affect the accessibility of the antecedent, namely, distance, competition, salience and unity.

To sum up, Ariel's Accessibility Theory sheds light on the relationship between the availability of an entity in the working memory and the use of the referring expressions. Anaphora resolution is virtually a mental process.

2.2. Mental Space Theory

Mental Space Theory was proposed by Gilles Fauconniers in 1984. Mental spaces can be thought of as temporary containers for relevant information about a particular domain [3]. They are small conceptual packets constructed as we think and talk, for purpose of local understanding and action [4].

While mental spaces can be built up out of people's encyclopedic knowledge or immediate experience, some grammatical expressions can also serve as "space builders" either to "open a new space or to shift focus to an existing space" [5]. Space builders typically (but not always) predicate potential relations between space elements.

Mental spaces are connected to each other by diverse kinds of mapping, especially identity and analogy mappings. Once a new space is built, it must keep connection and interaction with base space (reality space). This process follows Access Principle, which is given as follows:

If 2 elements a and b are linked by a connector $F(b=F(a))$, then the element b can be identified by naming, describing or pointing to its counterpart a.[5]

An example of how a built space and the base space interact can be demonstrated in the example of "*Jack wants to buy a car*". In this case, the verb *wants* functions as a space builder to set up a built space that is Jack's desire space, quite distinct from the reality space. Though the *car* in the base space refers to any car in general, it can still map onto the *car* in Jack's desire space, which may or may not be a specific car.

It is worth noting that a multitude of mental spaces are typically set up during the unfolding of a full discourse. In the above sentence "*Jack wants to buy a car*", two spaces are parallelly established.

3. The Contribution of Anaphora in Highlighting the Characteristics of Stream of Consciousness

Stream of consciousness is a term coined by William James to represent the flux of the mind with its continuous movement and change. As the name describes, stream of consciousness technique takes it as its major responsibility to capture the flux of the multitudinous thoughts and emotions as if they were free water flowing around the mind pond. As a result, the psychic being of the characters and its inherent nature of fluidity are the essential subject matter of stream of consciousness fictions. In what follows an analysis will be conducted to illustrate how anaphora contributes to demonstrating the dynamic fluidity and psychology-orientedness of stream of consciousness fiction *Dill Pickle*.

3.1. Dynamic Fluidity of Consciousness through the Linear Distribution of Anaphoric Expressions

The linear distribution of anaphoric expressions is a static presentation of the dynamic flow of thoughts in the mind of the characters. For example:

(3) She was thinking how well she remembered *that trick* of his—*the trick* of interrupting her—and of how *it* used to exasperate her six years ago.

In example (3), the three anaphoric expressions are in the form of distal demonstrative noun phrase (NP), definite NP and pronoun respectively. According to Ariel's hierarchy of Accessibility Markers, they indicate the different mental distances the narrator has to cover in the course of retrieving the referent. Specifically, when it is first mentioned, it is a remote memory, so the distal demonstrative NP is employed to refer to it. When it is rementioned and thus semi-activated, the anaphor turns into the definite NP. And when the referent is so accessible and comes to the tip of the tongue, the pronoun takes its place. The sequence of anaphoric expressions is a record of the dynamic flowing of the subject in the mental passage of the narrator.

3.2. Dynamic Fluidity of Consciousness through Mental Space Shifting

Examples (3) involves a sequence of successive anaphoric expressions to illustrate the flow of the thoughts, however, Mansfield typically employs the technique of mental space shift to display the fluidity of the consciousness. The shift takes place either between the consciousness of two or more characters or between the different levels of consciousness in one character. It is of significance in enriching the image of the characters as well as making an authentic representation of the random and uneven flow of thoughts.

In *Dill Pickle*, with the unfolding of the story, woven into the intricate network of mental spaces is the extensive use of anaphora which function differently mainly in the following three situations.

A. In situations where the antecedent remains salient albeit amid the frequent shift of mental spaces, the referent serves as a thread to string together the past and the present, the recollection and the reality. The referent becomes the soul underneath the dynamic flow of thoughts. For example:

(4) But of that evening she had remembered *a little pot of caviare*. *It* had cost seven and six pence. He could get over *it*. Think of *it*- a tiny jar like *that* costing seven.... While she ate *it*, he watched her. "No, really, *that* is eating money..." and he had begun some ...calculations.

In example (4), Mansfield, transcending the conventional space-time limits, adopted a chain of pronouns to skillfully string the direct speech and indirect speech, the the present and the past, the recalls and the reality. This special treatment of time, along with the anaphora, exhibits a harmony of retaining the stillness in the midst of motion and represents the fluidity of the kind of consciousness which is more constrained and compactly-laid.

B. In situations where the antecedent becomes ambiguous as two or more elements from a bunch of mental spaces bear similar salience, a much less informative anaphoric expression will lead to referential vagueness, which is also a reflection and consequence of the unconstrained movement of human consciousness. For example:

(5) ... "*that river life*," he went on, "is something quite special. After a day or two you cannot realize that you have ever known another and it is not necessary to know the language - *the life of the boat* creates *a bond* between you and the people that is more than sufficient. ... in the evening

there is *that endless singing.*”

She shivered, hearing *the boatman’s song* break out again loud and tragic, and seeing *the boat* floating on *the darkening river* with melancholy trees on either side... “Yes, I should like *that*,” said she, stroking her muff.

In example (5), the anaphora resolution is kind of confusing. Besides the base space of *conversation between Vera and the man*, multiple mental spaces are subsequently built up. Specifically, the man has generated two subspaces: one is the *recall* space showing how he travelled in Russia; the other is a *vision* space in which he visualized the trip that Vera along with them experienced, which was counter-factual. In the meantime, an imaginative space was built by Vera, imagining the view she would see in Russia. With three subspaces ahead, the anaphora resolution could go both ways. On the one hand, during the mental space shift, the new space will be focused while the old one will recede into the background. As a result, the interpretation of the anaphora could be conducted in Vera’s new mental space, in which there seems to be many possible antecedents, such as *the boatman’s song*, *boat*, *river*, each enjoying equal relevance. It is hard to tell which one is the antecedent. On the other hand, when more broadly conceived, the anaphor is included in the response in the base space of *conversation*. In the light of hierarchic configuration, its antecedent might come from the other part of the conversation, in which *the river life* is the salient topic.

To sum up, when there are more than one potential antecedents for a given anaphor, a far less informative anaphoric expression is likely to cause ambiguity, another stylistic feature of stream of consciousness fictions. Ambiguity itself embodies the dynamic flow of the kind of consciousness which is more unconstrained and unfettered. The truth is, there is no need for the writer to elaborate on this, as it is left for the reader to perceive how language is the vehicle of human thoughts.

C. In situations where the antecedent, usually in the form of definite NP, is not accessible to the addressee, the anaphora serves to create a profound implication which is imbedded in the cognition deviation between the addresser and the addressee. For example:

(6) “How well I remember one night, the night that I brought you the little Christmas tree, telling you all about my childhood ... and you listened, and your eyes shone, and I felt that you had even made the little Christmas tree listen too...”

... But of that evening she had remembered a little pot of caviare.... But now good-bye to the caviare. The christmas tree was on the table and the little boy lay under the cart with his head pillowed on *the yard dog*.

... But he didn’t follow. “which dog?” ...

In example (6), apparently, the anaphoric definite NP *the yard dog* is not perceptible to the listener though the speaker takes the definiteness, assuming the referent is equally accessible to the listener. Hence there occurs a cognitive deviation. How does the deviation come into being? What is deviation for?

Specifically, along with the base space of *conversation*, a rich array of mental spaces are set up. On the part of the man, there are three mental spaces: besides the *recall space* (space 1.1) about the Christmas evening and its subspace of his childhood (space 1.2); there is a *thought space* (space 1.3) in which he supposed his girlfriend was listening with particular interest. Then the element *that (Christmas) evening* triggers spontaneous reactions on the part of Vera: it maps into another recall space (space 2.1) which, however, is disconnected with space 1.1 merely from the cue of the space builder “but”. In space 2.1, Vera didn’t think of the Christmas tree, instead she thought of a pot of caviare, by which their different lifestyles were reflected, partially foreshadowing their split in their future. However, synchronic to her recollection, the man’s account continued, finally pulling her back to the reality. “But now good bye to the caviare” serves as another space builder to shift away from the caviare to the reality in which the man was talking about the Christmas tree and his childhood. Vera couldn’t inhibit her free association, she soon related to another two subspaces: the christmas space (space 2.2) in which the tree was on the table and the man’s childhood space (space

2.3) in which he once pillowed on the yard dog (figure 1).

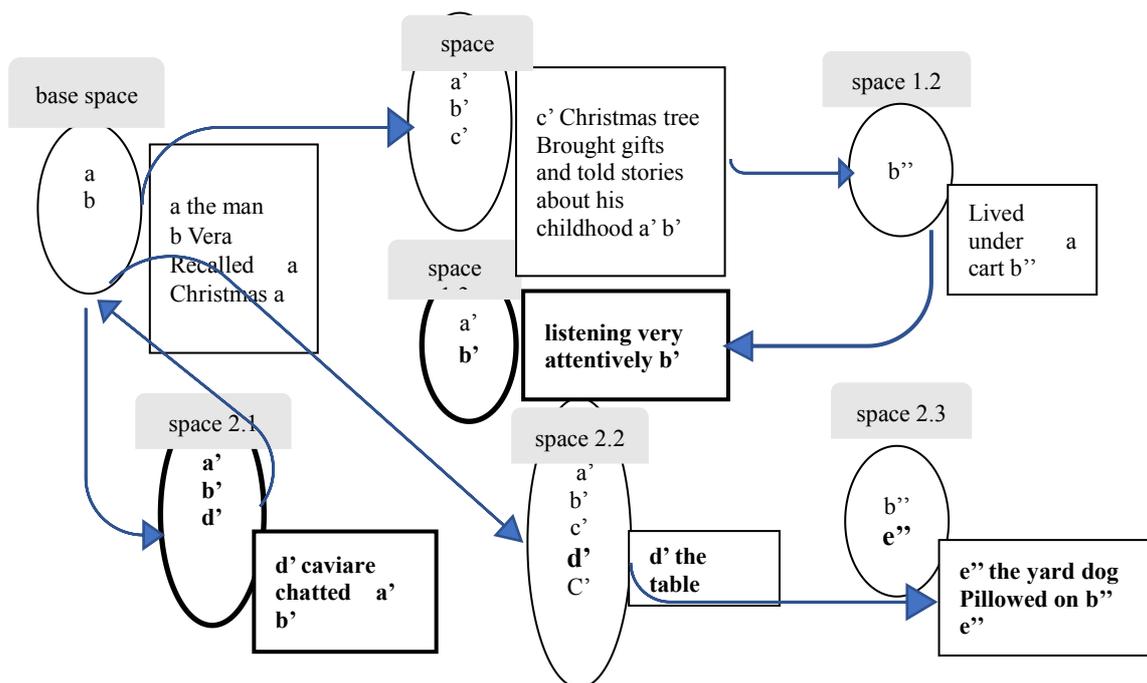


Figure 1 Mental space network of example (6)

Thus by comparing and contrasting the elements between space 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and spaces 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, it is noticeable that some elements such as *Vera listening attentively*, *caviare*, *the table* and *the yard dog* are not mutually shared. That's where the deviation takes place and why the mentioning of *the yard dog* causes confusion to the listener. The cognition deviation between the two characters shed some light on the personality conflict between them: one, caring much about his girlfriend's attitude of being a good listener, is self-engrossed and in need of admiration, while the other, greatly impressed by the cozy moment between a boy and a dog, is sensitive and in need of love and care.

In this case the unaccessibility of the referent is the consequence of the dynamic exchange between bursts of thoughts and associations of the two characters and it contributes to revealing the theme.

All in all, Mansfield resorts to abundant use of mental space shifting in her works both to reflect the dynamic and disorganized stream of consciousness and to accelerate the development of the story.

3.3. Psychology-orientedness through Anaphora

Distinct from traditional novel creation, Mansfield's chief concern is the inner world of the characters. In *Dill Pickle*, the author uses free indirect speech and the third person perspective to display the heroine's thoughts to the reader in a direct way, making the reader identify with the character in a subtle and realistic way. As a result, it is not sensible for the reader to appreciate her works without interpreting the anaphora from a psychological perspective.

3.3.1. Psychological Interpretation of Definite Anaphoric Expressions

Let's take a look at how definite anaphoric descriptions contribute to the psychological revelation in *Dill Pickle*.

(7) As he spoke,..., she felt *the strange beast* that had slumbered so long within her bosom stir,... and fix its longing, hungry stare upon those far away places.

Anaphorically, the definiteness in NP *the strange beast* indicates that the referent is available somewhere and can be recovered through inferring. Indeed, its resolution relies on an inward exploration of Vera's innermost world. To Vera, *the strange beast* is so familiar to her that she has taken it for granted. Thus instead of describing it as *a strange beast*, the author utilizes the definite NP to portray a woman with a long-cherished longing for exploring the outer world, which reflects Mansfield's feminist outlook in a society where women were confined domestically and were not

expected to have worldly knowledge.

3.3.2. Psychological Interpretation of Anaphoric Demonstratives

Another phenomenon worthy of attention is the anaphoric use of demonstratives *this* and *that* (see table 1). There are 17 cases for *that* and 2 cases for *this* that are interpreted in the sense of proximity: *this* is “near” in terms of time and space while *that* is distal from the speaker’s point of view (see examples (8) and (9)).

(8) “*That* river life,” he went on, “is something quite special. ...”

(9) Yet, what had remained in her mind of *that* particular afternoon was an absurd scene over the tea table.

Table 1 The distribution of demonstratives *this* and *that* in *Dill Pickle*

	demonstratives	Vera	the man
In terms of nearness in time and space	<i>this</i>	2	
	<i>that</i>	17	
In terms of psychological distance	<i>this</i>	1	0
	<i>that</i>	5	5

However, there are another 11 cases in which the demonstratives are not necessarily associated with “near” or “not near” concept in spatio-temporal sense. (see examples 10, and 11). Given that the author is immensely keen on observing the inner flashes of ideas in the mind of characters, it is always enlightening to savor the anaphora from the viewpoint of psychology.

It’s interesting to notice that, compared with the extensive use of *that*, *this* is used only once in a non-space-and-time way. For example:

(10) “Don’t go just for a moment,” and he caught up one of her gloves from the table and clutched at it as if *that* would hold her.

(11) Ah, God! What had she done! How had she dared to throw away her happiness like *this*.

Sure, demonstratives *this* and *that* can be interpreted in the sense of proximity, however, it is more revealing to annotate them psychologically: during the encounter after years of separation, Vera felt distant to the man. That’s why Vera used *that* 5 times to express the estrangement, both physically and psychologically. And when at one such moment she felt the relationship being rekindled, Vera used *this* to imply the her reopennes and passion. However, when Vera was finally disillusioned, she adopted *that* (see example 12) again to indicate both a past experience as well as an emotional loss.

(12) ... he cried, naive and hearty, and dreadfully like another side of *that* old self again,

Following this line of reasoning, the man has used *that* 5 times without even using *this* once, probably by doing so, Mansfield intends to portray the image of a man with no real intention for reviving the relationship.

4. Conclusion

In this paper, the writer, based on the Accessibility Theory and the Mental Space Theory, has analyzed how anaphora contributes to the stream of consciousness story *Dill Pickle*, mainly in the aspects of dynamic fluidity of consciousness and psychology-orientation. Surely, there are no rigid rules about the anaphoric forms for the sake of stream of consciousness textual features. However, consciously or unconsciously, the writer will employ anaphora to reinforce her stylistic effects. Anaphora does help to enhance the fluidity and vividness of the narration and the use of anaphoric expressions does have weighty implications, the beauty of which is left for the reader to elaborate and appreciate. Hopefully, by analyzing how anaphora contributes its part to helping reinforce a story’s stylistic features, this paper can give illumination on appreciating the stream of consciousness fictions.

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