

Modernist Narrative Aesthetics in *Ulysses**

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I

This investigation on the way various narrative styles are employed in each of the eighteen episodes of *Ulysses* is based on the narrative theories of Wayne Booth, Gérard Genette, Dorrit Cohn, Franz Stanzel, who question 'who is writing,' 'who is seeing,' 'who is speaking,' and finally 'who is listening.'¹⁾ Emphasis is placed on exploring the personality and manner of the narrator by discussing what kind of roles he plays, to what extent and in what way he presents himself or becomes invisible, and what relationships he has with the characters and eventually with the audience. In the episodes where extreme experimental styles are utilized, it is

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1) For more details, see the followings; Booth, *Rhetoric of Fiction*(Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1961)/ Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*/ Cohn, *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction*/ Stanzel, *A Theory of Narrative* (1984) & *Narrative Situations in the Novel*; Tom Jones, *Moby Dick, The Ambassadors, Ulysses*(1971)

difficult to define the point of view and discuss the issues raised above. However, in these cases characteristics of style itself can be explored. Finally, by discussing the reason why *Ulysses* is written like an encyclopedia of narrative techniques, the issue of the representation of reality²⁾ will be examined in terms of the modernist aesthetic.

In the rationalist ideology which has dominated the Western world since the Enlightenment, the objective and common values seen from the outside are regarded as the true and genuine reality. In the eighteenth and nineteenth century novels of such writers of Henry Fielding, Walter Scott, Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, Emily Brontë, Charles Dickens, William Thackeray, and George Eliot, the third person and/ or the first person narrator unfolds the stories by playing a total or a partial role of the author's mouthpiece. In the third person novels, especially, each narrator reveals himself, identifies his role, and tries to appeal to his readers. Like God, he exists everywhere and knows everything about the outside as well as the inside world of the characters. He employs the panoramic narration which describes the background and also summarizes the time. He objectively depicts characters, reports their thoughts as well as outer actions, comments on the moral issues, and forms a clear and persuasive definition about facts. Also, he betrays his overt opinion which he thinks he shares with the readers or hopes the readers will consent to.

In novels such as Austen's *Persuasion*, Scott's *The Heart of Midlothian*, Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley*, and George Eliot's *Adam Bede*, for example, each narrator becomes the origin and center of meaning, by producing, providing, and controlling it. The narrator possesses power in presenting the ultimate answer and moral judgment to every issue without hesitation(Souvage 11-22) It is because there is a foundation upon which the writer and readers can build a certain

2) Here 'representation of reality' does not mean that the centered narrator in the eighteenth and nineteenth century novels reproduces the 'fixed reality' with the integrated program, but that the non-centered narrator gives aesthetic order to 'the changing reality' through various role plays.

kind of common truth that the eighteenth and nineteenth century novels can be developed in such a way. In other words, this kind of narrative technique reflects the spirit of the times, in which values and moral convictions among the individuals, and between the individuals and the society, are not so diverse, allowing each member of the society to share the all-agreed values and moral convictions.

However, from the middle to the end of the nineteenth century, the established scientific rationalism and certainty was undermined by Charles Darwin's 'Theory of Evolution,' Frederick Nietzsche's assertion that "to insist on absoluteness is morbid and realism is a delusion," and Sigmund Freud's 'Anatomy of Psychology.' In the twentieth century, the First World War, Albert Einstein's 'Theory of Relativity,' Louis De Broglie's 'Quantum Theory,' Werner Kal Heisenberg's 'Uncertainty Principle,' Impressionism and Cubism in which objects are represented from various angles, all trigger deeper transformations in the society. There is no longer absolute moral values and common convictions between the individuals. Ambiguity itself is prevalent in the society. No one is certain that his or her opinion is absolutely true, or is the same as others' opinions. No one can control others, and therefore, no person's subjectivity can be accepted as the general or universal truth.

The modernist novels such as James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses*, William Faulkner's *The Sound and The Fury*, *As I Lay Dying*, and *Absalom, Absalom!*, Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, and *The Waves*, portray the modern world in which there are no more common values and convictions. These novels try to depict such a subjective and relative world with various narrative techniques. These novels do not tell us how characters behave; rather, they present us with how they respond to the outside world.

The most important difference of the modern novels from the eighteenth and nineteenth century novels is that the former no longer depict the outside world of characters. They began to acknowledge the importance of the drama which is occurring in the mind of individuals placed in the world of subjectivity and relativity. They describe a withdrawal from external phenomena into the flickering half-shades of the author's private world. That is, these novels are concerned with

the motive of the outer action and the inner response to the circumstances the characters face, rather than with the outer action itself and its circumstances. Those novels, paying attention to *how* any circumstance can be subjectively experienced by each individual in his or her inner world, depict the stream of consciousness which repeats itself over the movement of memory, recollection, analogy, and contemplation. Thus, we are led to try to clarify whose perceptions, thoughts, and feelings inform the world of a given novel.

Most modernist critics in the times of modern novels, such as Henry James, T. S. Eliot, Percy Lubbock, Ford Madox Ford, Joseph Warren Beach, and Norman Friedman prefer the novels in which narrators do not reveal themselves to the self-conscious novels in which narrators expose themselves in various ways. A greater preference may be traced back to Aristotle's statement that "The poet should tell as little as possible." The common claim of Jamesian critics is that the novels which have passion for the style of 'mimesis,' 'showing,' and 'self-effaced narrator' are more dramatic and better than the novels which are mainly written in the style of 'diegesis,' 'telling,' and 'self-conscious narrator.'³⁾

On the other hand, post-Jamesian critics such as Booth, Genette, Cohn, and Stanzel break up the dichotomy of 'showing' and 'telling' and suggest that there is no issue of 'better' or 'worse' between the two. They contend that between the twin poles of 'pure showing' and 'pure telling' lies a complex of narrative patterns. They believe that either 'telling,' 'showing,' or any other narrative strategy placed between the two may be the best possible strategic rhetorics depending on the situation and subject matter. Thus, they are mainly concerned about who talks to the reader; from what angle regarding the story does he tell it: from above, periphery, center, front, or shift; what channels of information does the narrator use to convey the story to the reader: author's words, thoughts, perceptions, feelings, or character's words, actions, thoughts, perceptions, and feelings; at what distance does he place the reader from the story: near, far, or shifting. These critics, therefore, pay attention

3) For more details, see the following; James, 147. 265/ Eliot, 37-44/ Lubbock, 62, 69/ Ford, 121. 77-122, 137-138/ Beach, 114./ Friedman, 61-65

to the variety of the narrator's characteristics, role, and relationship with the characters.

II

Based on these critics' theories, my studies start from the recognition that *Ulysses* is not just a novel of an "exit-author" but a dynamic novel in which the role of the narrator varies in every episode and even in the same sentence relevant to the degree to which he shares his role with characters in depicting the reality. The earlier critics of *Ulysses* have paid attention mainly to the narrative techniques of the first nine episodes and the last one. Later on many critics began to study the revolutionary and experimental narrative techniques of the latter part, too. However, there is no book which has thoroughly investigated *Ulysses*, "the encyclopaedia of narrative technique," by applying Post-Jamesian doctrines.

Ulysses is unique in the sense that it is written with various experimental and revolutionary techniques in order to depict the subjectivity and relativity of the modern world. Some techniques such as (direct) interior monologue, variations of interior monologue, indirect interior monologue(narrated monologue, free indirect discourse), soliloquy, drama, verse, and multiple points of view, are employed in any other modern novels as well(Humphrey 23-41). However, other techniques which will be explored in this paper are totally new or even post-modernistic. Even if one read only *Ulysses*, therefore, it is possible to experience various narrative techniques that can be found in other modern novels and even in post modern novels.

The narrative techniques of *Ulysses* can be introduced individually from the title through the first half(episodes 1-9) to the latter one(episodes 10-18). First, the title *Ulysses* itself is the Latin name for Odysseus who is the hero of Homer's *The*

Odyssey. Joyce borrows narrative schema, circumstances, characters, major motif, and thematic matter from *The Odyssey* and then recreates them in *Ulysses*. The purpose of these odyssean parallels is to control, order, and give shape and significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy. By doing so, Joyce obtains the same effect as would the intrusion of the authorial comment, avoiding the old tactic of direct authorial commentary.

The style used in the first nine episodes of *Ulysses* is called 'the initial style.' This style is, in various degrees, interwoven with third person narrator's 'stage direction-like' explanation of the circumstances, dialogues between the characters, narrated monologues (free indirect discourse), interior monologues, and psycho narration. In episodes 1, 2, 3, 9, and some parts of episode 7, Stephen's identity, his agony over his dead mother and his relationship with his friends, families, and students unfold little by little. In episodes 4, 5, 6, 8, and another part of episode 7, Bloom's identity and his suffering over his flirting wife, dead son, dead father, daughter, friends, and his ethnic background are gradually revealed.

At first, the surroundings and outer actions of each character are described in colorless and neutral styles (episodes. 1 & 4). The narrator merely appears to be a stage director setting up the background and the frame of dialogues. Thus, the narrator in the initial style is, in general, not staged-centered but self-effaced. The narrator acts as if he know nothing about the reality or as if he can't say anything even if he knows something. Thus, the reality of Stephen and Bloom are gradually revealed (episodes. 2, 3 & 5, 6) through dialogues between characters, narrated monologues, and interior monologues. The narrator uses the modes of expression borrowed from each character whose points of view he is attuned to in order to reveal the inner worlds of each character through the style of narrated monologue. Thus, at times, the narrator who is with 'philosophy-oriented' Stephen looks different from the narrator who is with 'science-oriented' Bloom.

Through the interior monologue of the multiple reflectors, the narrator sometimes conceals himself by permitting the reader to enjoy the illusion of un-mediated reality presented through the interior monologue of the multiple

reflectors. During this interior monologue the narrator seems to disappear from the scene after leading readers to the window of the characters' inner worlds. The gradual abandonment of the narrator's external, objective standpoint and the increasing presentation of the events from character's subjective point of view suggest the process of character's withdrawal into self, his increasing loss of contact with the world outside of him and his final confinement in his narrow subjectivity. Through these frequent but non-sequential shifts among stage direction, dialogue, narrated monologue, interior monologue, various information about Bloom and Stephen can gradually become known to readers.

In the meantime, the presence of the narrator is detected when he alludes to Bloom's exaggerated thought(episode 8) and when he mentions characteristics of the characters by word play. Above all, his presence is more revealed in episode 7 in which 63 headings are inserted into the original manuscript later on between the interwoven pattern of the initial style. These headings surface as marks on almost every page, suggesting objectively a presence here which is unlike any we have seen in the first part of *Ulysses*. Through this visual disturbance the narrator lets readers know he is there and destroys the illusion of un-mediated reality. These, on the surface, look like the newspaper headings. However, they are not always playing a role of the newspaper headings which try to summarize the contents and convey main points to readers. They sometimes assume an ironic, ambiguous, or even opposite attitude towards main contents. In this regard the narrator is quite different from the eighteenth and nineteenth century narrators who are the center of the meaning. But, the narrator's mocking attitude towards characters are not as serious compared to the 10-17 episodes of the latter part. Anyway, these headings rather self-consciously parody the newspaper headings by interfering or deferring readers from grasping the main points.

The techniques of the latter part of *Ulysses* are much different from 'the initial style' where we can raise questions about whose point of view the narrator borrows and how far the distance between the narrator and characters, or between characters and readers is. The techniques of the latter part(episode 10-18) are so experimental

and revolutionary that we can investigate the experimentalism itself from each episode as well as check in detail the degree to which the narrator reveals his presence. Then, Ithaca(episode 17) can be posted at the one pole of 'telling' and Penelope(episode 18) at the other pole of 'showing', while other episodes can be regarded as being at various points on a spectrum-like line between the two poles.

Wandering Rocks(episode 10) is, at first glance, written in 'the initial style' just like any other episode of the first half of *Ulysses*. In one sense it is true, considering that the narrator tries to make both major and minor characters' stream of consciousness revealed through interior monologue or narrated monologue as he does in any other episode of 'the initial style.' However, the narrator has also omniscient power with which he in sequence parallels two or three scenes at the same time among 19 different scenes from three o'clock to four o'clock p. m. on June 16, 1904 in Dublin. This technique called 'space montage' makes it possible for readers to see various wandering characters in different scenes at the same time through bird's eye view. Because the 'space montage' technique is mixed with the initial style, readers can see into the inside of each character as well as the over-all circumstances where each is placed at the same time. The mixture of the two vivifies the hospital world, wasteland, and death-in-life by showing wandering Dubliners who are suffering from paralysis, disintegration, moral insensitivity, and agony.

The technique of Sirens(episode 11) is in musical terms called 'fugal,' as a fuge consists of three parts: the overture, development section, and the last part. This episode starts with 58 sentences which are seemingly not ordinary sentences. They, at first glance, look like nonsensical words, codes, stenography, contents of music, or musical notes. In fact, these are main motifs which will be expanded in the development section. In the development section, Bloom's agony over his wife's sexual intercourse with Boylan which will be done off-stage, loneliness, and sorrow are dramatically and lively revealed when his sensitive mind is exposed to the various musical elements such as 47 songs which were referred to up to 158 times, musical accompaniment, and various allusion or talks about music. In the

conclusion, agony-stricken Bloom leaves the bar where other people are still singing. While Bloom's feeling is exposed to readers, the narrator in this episode is not self-effaced. He betrays his self-consciousness as a virtuoso, when he frequently mocks Bloom's agony and other characters' feelings through word play or cynical tone, and above all, when he omnisciently parallels more than two scenes and refers the past events to the present. This 'fugal' technique is very proper to catch sensitive emotions of Bloom hidden deep down in his heart and impossible to be revealed in full degree by narrated monologue, and interior monologue, and dialogue.

Cyclops(episode 12) is unique in the sense that there is both the first person narrator and the third person narrator in one episode and that both reciprocally bring the discourse together. The first narrative mode is that the nameless first person narrator or in-scene narrator reports the scene which he witnesses with short sentences, present tense, and colloquial speech. And the second narrative mode is that the third person narrator or off-scene narrator interpolates more than 33 times into the first person narrator's discourse with complex sentences, past tense, mysteriously exaggerated style and parody. That is, the same event is reported alternatively by the two different narrators, and each narrator's discourse mutually counterbalances, overthrows, replenishes, or reenforce each other. Whatever and however they report, the fact that two different narrators lead the discourse together testifies that either is unreliable, insufficient, inappropriate, and relative in representing the reality on its own.

Nausicca(episode 13) is also unusual in that it is written in different narrative techniques according to the subjective matters even in the same episode - omniscient narration, narrated monologue, variation of interior monologue, and again omniscient narration. First of all, around the first two pages, the omniscient narrator provides the reader with a bird's eye view of the general background. Then, in the next two-thirds of this episode, the narrated monologue(free indirect discourse) spreads out - the narrator, in past tense and third person pronoun, exposes Gerty's stream of consciousness by borrowing her point of view and her

romantic, dreamy, sentimental language and style, as if she directly reveals her thoughts which remain deep in her inside.

After this, about the last third of this episode is written in some variation of interior monologue. Except for the narrator's stage direction, this section is dominated by Bloom's interior monologue. Through this technique, readers can enjoy the illusion that they directly look into Bloom's agony over his wife's adultery, languid happiness after masturbation, and dreamy sentimentalism. Lastly, in the last page the omniscient narrator once again explains different scenes within the same period and narrates the characters' psychology in the scenes. The fact that different narrative techniques are employed even within a single episode shows that a proper style can be applied according to the different subject matter and that any single narrative style is not absolutely appropriate in all situations.

The Oxen of the Sun(episode 14) is peculiar in the sense that the events are described by parodying all different styles developed in sequence in the history of the English Language beginning from Anglo-Saxon English through the representative writers' styles in the fifteenth through nineteenth centuries to Pidgin English, Cockney English, and Bowery slang, etc. Therefore, those styles are totally different from those of the characters. These are the styles which representative writers of each period and users of the special languages would put to use, if they were assigned to write some parts of this episode. Here, the narrator is not Jamesian self-effaced but self-conscious in that he changes his identity by changing his mask of styles like a proteus or a chameleon. This attempt vividly underlines the inability of any language and style to solely capture the reality.

Circe(episode 15) is another innovative style because its format is 'drama in the novel' equipped with dialogue between characters, soliloquy, and stage direction. This drama intertwines the present world and hallucination, while its characters consist of living and dead persons, animals, inanimated objects, surrealistic things, and even onomatopoeic words. This episode is a live dramatization of what the characters experience in the real world and what can be found in their memory, unconsciousness, and hallucination. Ironically, however, the narrator is not just a

stage manager but an active master designer. Through stage directions, he describes, in detail, the circumstances in which characters are placed. He also indicates when characters appear or disappear, and sometimes explains characters' state of mind. This style of drama is more effective and lively than, telling, the initial style, or any other innovative narrative techniques because it simultaneously and in a lively manner shows both the worlds of the present and hallucination of Bloom and Stephen.

The narrator of Eumaeus (episode 16) wears another peculiar mask of style. Narrator's sentences are deliberately twisted, incorrect, lengthy, worn-out, trite, stale, wandering, and lifeless. They are full of circumlocution, euphemisms, confused metaphors, foreign languages, special terms, colloquialism, and coarse expressions. The structures frequently change midway in the sentence and are interrupted by parentheses. There is no more interior monologue and even Bloom's inner world is revealed through the psycho narration or the third person monologue mediated by this deliberately distorting narrator. Some critics assert that this narrative technique is to reflect the main characters' spiritual and physical fatigue. However, the main purpose of this style is to emphasize the difficulty of communication and the inability to grasp the chameleon-like reality.

Ithaca (episode 17) is a 'pure telling.' There is absolutely no illusion of un-mediated reality any more. The omniscient narrator raises 309 questions which he is thoroughly aware of and answers them in detail. This one-man scientific catechism covers related or never-related questions to the major characters, from the most objective to the most subjective questions and from the most important to the most unimportant ones. Thus, even the feelings and unconscious sentiments are revealed through this scientific catechism. A train of catechism continues to the last moment when Bloom falls asleep. Despite a lot of useful and minute information, some of it is so incorrect or in conflict with another that it prevents readers from reaching the objective and absolute truth. This means that the narrator is not the center of the truth, but just a self-conscious virtuoso. This narrative technique rather serves to emphasize modernist uncertainty and indeterminacy in the phenomenon of

one's life.

Penelope(episode 18) is a 'pure showing,' that is, the radical opposite to Ithaca(episode 17). What flits through Molly's mind transcending time and space, while she lies down in her bed, is revealed without any intervention of mediation. It seems as if someone looks deep into Molly's mind and records itself without addition and subtraction in sequence. Sentences are grammatically incorrect, mixed with various tenses, filled with foreign languages, colloquial, vulgar expressions, ironic exclamations - all of which reflects Molly's own style as a sensual woman asleep. For about 40 pages, there are only 2 periods and only 8 paragraphs. Even the first words of all but two of those paragraphs don't start with capital letters. This emphasizes the fact that her stream of consciousness is running without interrupting. A train of thought keeps flowing while being followed by newly developed ones. Therefore, this episode looks like a 'flood' or 'torrent' of consciousness rather than just 'stream' of consciousness

In this episode, the narrator seems absent. However, he exists even in the most dramatized novel through the manner in which he arranges his material. He can never choose to disappear, because the narrator is the persona of the author. The narrator in this episode is somehow different from narrators in other episodes. In other episodes, the narrator more or less shares the stage with characters, or takes the center stage by mimicking, exaggerating, and mocking the characters' personality and behaviors, through his boldness, open derision, parodic nature and word play. The narrator's active, overt, and self-conscious role in other episodes of the latter part usually obscures the individuality of the characters. However, the narrator's presence in this episode is only felt in the choice of words, syntax, and structure. Thus, the purpose of this kind of style is to show a live picture of character's stream of consciousness itself by creating the illusion of un-mediated reality.

III

As discussed thoroughly above, the narrative style of *Ulysses* changes from episode to episode and even within a single particular episode. Accordingly, the narrator's personality and performance are continually changing: he wears a variety of masks like a chameleon through various interactions with characters in each episode. The 'pure telling' of Ithaca(episode 17), the 'pure showing' of Penelope (episode 18), or the blending of the two in various degrees are simply some of many possible disguises. The narrator of *Ulysses*, in this respect, is unlike the narrators found in the eighteenth and nineteenth century novels who commented, summarized and judged human behaviour.

Joyce chooses his special rhetorical strategy in respect to the social and historical context of skepticism, relativity and uncertainty of the modernist world, where all-agreed moral convictions and assurance cannot be found due to the ever-growing multiple differentiation of the reading public. The author no longer can give the ultimate truth and certainty of beliefs to the readers. No single point of view, including the implied author's, can be accepted as the bearer of the ultimate truth.

Within each episode, therefore, Joyce develops ways to view the world through the eyes of characters by constantly shifting the angle of vision. This multiple points of view technique is designed by earlier modernist writers to construct a multi- dimensional, fictional reality in the mind of readers. Joyce believes, however, that the technique of multiple points of view is not enough to catch the chameleon-like nature of human beings as close as possible, which changes its hue at every new approach.⁴⁾ Therefore, he employs an encyclopaedia of narrative styles such as the parallel correspondence between *Ulysses* and *The Odyssey*, the

4) This expression appears in 'The Oxen of the Sun(episode 14): "...the virtue of the chameleon to change her hue at every new approach,..." *Ulysses*, 337

technique of multiple points of view, initial style, newspaper style, space montage, fugate style, technique of in-scene and out-scene narrator, different styles according to different subject matter even within a single episode, parody of all different protean styles in the history of English language throughout a single episode, drama, self-consciously distorted style, scientific catechism of 'pure telling', and autonomous interior monologue of 'pure showing'.

Through all these different experimental and revolutionary narrative techniques, the unique reality of Bloomsday and its citizens are seen repeatedly. Thus, the information established earlier is constantly changed, offset, or reinforced by the newly developed information. In other words, no one angle or narrative style would suffice to grasp the protean elusiveness of human nature in its completeness. Joyce wants to show us that in the uncertain modern day world, every point of view or every narrative style is insufficient, inappropriate, arbitrary, and relative. He believes, however, that despite doubts, frustration and skepticism in representing the reality, the changing reality itself can be depicted stereoscopically up to a certain point through all these different narrative techniques.

In conclusion, Joyce reveals to us that, in the modernist world of relativity, best possible depiction of reality can only be aesthetically achieved through illuminating identical incidents from many conflicting points of view and through different narrative techniques. In this kind of novel, where there isn't any single absolute or authoritative way to represent reality, the reader must be a 'writerly reader' who creates and recreates over and over again the text's meaning from what is presented through different points of view and narrative techniques.

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AbstractModernist Narrative Aesthetics in *Ulysses*

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This paper will explore how the reality can be represented in *Ulysses* by investigating an encyclopedic showroom of narrative techniques from the modernist aesthetics point of view. My studies start from the recognition that *Ulysses* is not just a novel of an “exit-author” but a dynamic novel in which different combinations of voice and perspective create a complex of narrative patterning and challenge the reader to create meaning of the text. Accordingly, the narrator’s personality and performance are continually changing: he wears a variety of masks like a chameleon. The pure telling of ‘Ithaca,’ the pure showing of ‘Penelope,’ or the blending of the two in various degrees are simply many of the possible disguises.

My studies suggest that Joyce chooses this special rhetorical strategy in respect to the social and historical context of skepticism, relativity, and uncertainty of the modernist world. Considering that no one angle or narrative style would suffice to grasp the protean elusiveness of human nature in its completeness, Joyce believes that the best possible depiction of reality can only be achieved through illuminating identical incidents from many conflicting points of view and through different narrative techniques.

- **주제어** : narrative technique, pure telling, pure showing, modernist aesthetics, representation of reality, exit-author, self-conscious narrator (서술 기법, 순수한 말하기, 순수한 보여주기, 모더니즘 미학, 현실의 재현, 저자의 사라짐, 자의식적인 서술자)