補足としての語り手:
アレン・テートによるジョイス作「死者たち」の読解の逆構造解釈

ポール・スミンキー[*1]

Narrator as Supplement: A Deconstruction of Allen Tate's Reading of Joyce's "The Dead"

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要約

アレン・テートは「死者たち」に関する著名な論文の中で，ジェームス・ジョイスが「フローベールの自然主義を英語により完全なる高みに極めている」ことを証明しようと試みた。テートは，雪が始めは客観的な現実として表現されているとし，後の結論において雪は拡大された意識の象徴に高められていると論じている。

しかしながら，ジョイスが自然主義者であるというテートの議論は，語り手の単純化した視点に依存するものである。テートにとって自然主義とは，作者が自身を抑制することで，象徴主義は外部からの働きに基づくものではなく，「まず，登場人物の意識の中の，目に見える経験された瞬間である，その存在自体から生み出される」ものを意味する。登場人物は，統合された意識として認識されるものであるということがテートの議論の中心である。

しかしながら，ジョイスのテキストを詳しく読解すると，語り手と登場人物は明確な輪郭で描かれたものではなく，登場人物は歪められた視点により構成されており，その視点はしばしば移り変わるものであることが分かる。これらの問題を，テートの概念である「放浪の語り手」により克服しようとするテートの試みは失敗に終わる。なぜなら，テートが隠蔽しようとした不備な点はこのテキストの補足により明らかにされるからである。ジョイスの巧みな技巧は，明らかにテキストから読み取れるからである。

KEY WORDS: *James Joyce, "The Dead," Allen Tate, Deconstruction, Point of View*

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1 Introduction: Tate's Roving Narrator"

Allen Tate's famous essay on The Dead" hopes to show that James Joyce brings to the highest pitch of perfection in English the naturalism of Flaubert" (389). Tate's claim that Joyce is a naturalist, however, rests upon a simplistic view of narration. For Tate, naturalism means that the author suppresses himself, so that symbolism is not laid on the action from the outside, but derives its validity from its being, in the first place, a visible and experienced moment in the consciousness of a character" (391-2). It is central to Tate's argument, then, that characters be identified as unified consciousnesses.

A close reading of Joyce's text, however, reveals that the narrator and characters cannot be clearly delineated, that characters are constructed through a skewed point of view, and that the point of view often shifts. Tate's attempt to overcome these problems with his concept of a roving narrator" fails because this supplementing of the text reveals the inadequacy that he attempts to hide: the manipulations of Joyce are clearly evident in the text. Tate's roving narrator" is a supplement in the Derridean sense-it is something that is added to the text; at the same time, it indicates a lack in the text (Culler 103). Tate would like to think that his concept is an inessential extra which innocently describes the text, but the concept makes clear the most essential difficulty of reading Joyce's text: the consciousnesses of various characters are difficult to delineate, and are inseparable from the narrator's consciousness.

Tate's supplement, then, is itself in need of supplementation, and raises questions concerning the narration of the story and Joyce's intentions. In attempting to explain the logic behind the apparently random roving of the roving narrator," Tate appeals to the concept of authorial intentionality, so that Joyce is described as a kind of invisible presence that manipulates the roving narrator" in a meaningful way.

Tate's concept of a roving narrator," then, is supplemented by authorial intention, which contradicts Tate's original claim that Joyce is a naturalist. As Tate himself makes clear, his claim for Joyce's naturalism rests on the fact that nothing is given us from the externally omniscient point of view" (391). And yet, Tate's discussion of the text draws the reader's attention to another kind of omniscience: the roving narrator" is subtlety-but noticeably-manipulated to bring about Joyce's desired effects.

2 The Manipulations of the Neutral" Narrator

The Dead" opens with a deceptively simple sentence that is surprisingly difficult to analyze in terms of point of view and character: Lily, the caretaker's daughter, was literally run off her feet" (175). Tate claims that the narration at the beginning of The Dead" is impartial, and that we open with a neutral or suspended point of view" (390), and indeed, on the surface, the sentence appears to be a neutral" description of Lily, the Misses Morkan's maid, preparing for the annual Christmas party. Far from being neutral," however, the sentence reveals a biased and condescending attitude, which is typical of Gabriel and his aunts. Although the guests are referred to as gentlemen" and ladies" and Gabriel's aunts are referred to as Miss Kate" and Miss Julia," Lily is only referred to by her first name, so that her inferior status is made clear. Similarly, the reference to her being the caretaker's daughter," which seems to be an unnecessary and superfluous detail, marks Lily as being inferior by nature of both her class and gender.

The first part of this opening sentence, then, is biased and condescending in its description of Lily, and one might be tempted to argue that the point of view is Gabriel's, especially considering his patronizing comment on her personal life. One problem with this interpretation, of course, is that Gabriel has not yet

arrived, but another, more important, problem is that the second part of the sentence (. . . was literally run off her feet") is inconsistent with Gabriel's mindset. To begin with, the phrase is illogical and nonsensical, for the word literally" is juxtaposed with the metaphoric expression run off her feet." More importantly, the phrase describes how exhausted Lily herself must be feeling and describes that feeling in language that Lily herself might use. In other words, the point of view of this phrase appears to be Lily's, even though the first part of the sentence is not likely hers.

The point of view of this one sentence becomes even more difficult to explain when one recognizes that the symbolism extends to outside the scene and refers to the story itself. The title of the story is a clue to the reader to look for images relating to death. The fact that Lily's name is the same name as the flower that represents life, rebirth, purity, and resurrection, and the fact that Lily's father is a caretaker," one whose work involves taking care of the dead, point to a narrative consciousness that is outside the story.

The narration of the first sentence, then, far from being the neutral point of view" that Tate argues for, is a complex mix of at least three points of view: Gabriel's (and perhaps his aunts'), Lily's, and the narrator's. Such a blending of points of view makes it difficult for the reader to clearly identify the narrator as a single consciousness, but it also makes it difficult to identify the consciousness of characters. In reading The Dead," one is often left to puzzle over whether a sentence or phrase reflects a character's consciousness or an external authorial consciousness.

3 Indeterminacy of Character and Narrator

Although the opening paragraph of The Dead" focuses somewhat on Lily, it would be a mistake to argue, as Tate does, that the moment Gabriel enters the house the eye shifts from Lily to Gabriel" (391), for it is doubtful that the point of view was Lily's in the first place. Indeed, the early narration of the story is cluttered with a cacophony of voices, which makes it impossible to identify the narrator with a single character. Ross Chambers refers to these distortions as noise," which he defines as being the fundamental and primary ongoing circumstance of chaos against which the message labors to constitute itself" (97). In the opening paragraph, it is true, Lily seems to be the dominant voice. One can almost hear Lily speaking through the narrator when we are told that it was well for her she had not to attend to the ladies also" (175). Similarly, the reference to Miss Kate and Miss Julia's fussing" suggests that we are looking through Lily's eyes.

The second paragraph, however, again refers to the fussing" of the sisters, but this time, it is less clear that the point of view is Lily's: They were fussy, that was all. But the only thing that they would not stand was back answers" (176). The phrase that was all" suggests that the sisters themselves feel justified in being fussy, so that it difficult to determine how Lily feels about their bossiness. Similarly, the narrator's description of the upcoming party seems to reflect the sisters' (or perhaps Gabriel's) deluded point of view: It was always a great affair, the Misses Morkan's annual dance. . . . Never once had it fallen flat" (175).

The difficulty of reading this opening description, then, is that the narrator does not describe the scene neutrally, or from a single point of view, but describes the scene using language that might be attributed to any of several characters. The phrase they had good reason to be fussy on such a night," for example, is difficult to read as objective description given by a detached narrator. And yet it is

impossible to determine absolutely which characters' viewpoint is given.

Throughout The Dead," apparently simple descriptions are complicated by the fusion of narrator with character. As John Paul Riquelme points out, the characters' voices are so thoroughly embedded in the narration that they cannot be distinguished from the narrator's voice (122). Indeed, the very attempt to determine what characters in the story-including Gabriel-are thinking and feeling, becomes increasingly difficult, and ultimately, impossible.

4 Gabriel and the Narrator

As The Dead" progresses, and the story begins to focus more exclusively on Gabriel, it becomes increasingly more difficult to distinguish narrator from character. Early in the story, after Lily responds bitterly to Gabriel's inappropriate personal questions, the reader is told that Gabriel coloured as if he felt he had made a mistake" (178). A literal interpretation of this description would demand that the reader refrain from drawing conclusions about Gabriel's state of mind. In other words, the narrator's speculation concerning Gabriel's coloring could be mistaken. As Riquelme points out, the narrator is giving a psychological interpretation of Gabriel's features (123), and it is important that the reader refrain from identifying Gabriel with the narrator.

Shortly after Gabriel's exchange with Lily, however, the gap between the narrator and Gabriel seems at times to disappear altogether, so that the narration approaches being a stream of consciousness accounting of Gabriel's thoughts. Looking over his speech, Gabriel appears to reflect on his inability to communicate effectively:

> They would think that he was airing his superior education. He would fail with them just as he had failed with the girl in the pantry. He had taken up a wrong tone. His whole speech was a mistake from first to last, an utter failure (179).

Although it is natural to read this passage as being Gabriel's thoughts, there are no idioms, vivid phrases, or exclamations to rule out the possibility that it is the narrator-and not Gabriel-who is speculating about how the other characters in the story will respond to Gabriel's speech. The reason that few readers interpret these lines in this way, however, is that the narration has begun to focus more and more on Gabriel, and it would be odd for the narration to suddenly jump to an omniscient point of view. Even so, it seems clear that Gabriel's thoughts are being narrated here.

And yet, as the gap between the narrator and Gabriel diminishes, it becomes increasingly more difficult to attribute thoughts to Gabriel, for the narration is raised to a higher and more symbolic level that seems to exceed his limitations. Shortly before Gabriel gives his speech, for example, the narrator reflects poetically on the scene outside:

> People, perhaps, were standing in the snow on the quay outside, gazing up at the lighted windows and listening to the waltz music. The air was pure there. In the distance lay the park where the trees were weighted with snow. The Wellington Monument wore a gleaming cap of snow that flashed westward over the white field of Fifteen Acres (Joyce 202).

There is nothing in these lines to clearly mark them as Gabriel's, and as Riquelme points out, this is possibly the narrator's speculation about the scenery outside (125). One can argue that these words should be attributed to Gabriel: the words reflect Gabriel's mood, the word perhaps" is often used by him, and the image of the snow will increasingly become entwined with Gabriel's thoughts.

On the other hand, it is precisely the symbolic nature of these lines that distances them from Gabriel. To begin with, the symbolism here connects not only to the imagery in the closing section of this story, but to other stories in *Dubliners* as well. For example, in The Sisters," the first story of the collection, the narrator recalls that he studied the lighted square of window" (Joyce 9), just as the narrator here imagines people gazing up at the lighted windows." In both passages, of course, the image is of hidden death or paralysis" lying behind a facade of happiness and light. It would be absurd, of course, to attribute this consciousness of the image's meaning to Gabriel.

5 The Indeterminate Snow

For Tate, the closing section of The Dead" is especially important because he sees the snow as being most representative of Joyce's naturalism. Tate argues that the snow is first presented as an objective reality and then raised to a symbol of expanded consciousness" in the conclusion. But as Tate recognizes, it is essential that this consciousness" be Gabriel's-not the narrator's, and certainly not Joyce's-for naturalism demands that symbolism begin as objective" detail and not be laid on the action from outside" (392).

> It had begun to snow again. He watched sleepily the flakes, silver and dark, falling obliquely against the lamplight. The time had come for him to set out on his journey westward. . . . It was falling, too, upon every part of the lonely churchyard on the hill where Michael Furey lay buried. It lay thickly drifted on the crooked crosses and headstones, on the spears of the little gate, on the barren thorns. His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead (Joyce 223-4).

For most critics, the most essential question concerning this passage is whether or not Gabriel himself consciously recognizes his own paralysis" and therefore has the possibility of going beyond his current limitations, or whether, like so many other characters in *Dubliners*, he is unconscious and therefore trapped in his own paralysis." The question is whether to attribute the closing lines to Gabriel or to the narrator.

Tate, of course, insists that the closing section reflects the sudden revelation to Gabriel of his egoistic relation to his wife and, through that revelation, of his inadequate response to his entire experience" (390). Tate sees the snow as being a symbol of Gabriel's escape from his own ego into the larger world of humanity" (394). Tate's claim, however, is based on his belief in a roving narrator" that is able to magically disappear when deemed necessary. And yet, the narrator does not so much disappear as become less distinct, and for the reader, this ghostly presence haunts the text and makes it difficult to attribute consciousness to Gabriel.

To begin with, the fact that third-person narration is used indicates that there is still some distance between Gabriel and the narrator, so that phrases such as the time had come for him to set out on his journey westward" can be interpreted in one of two ways: as Gabriel's deciding to set out on a new journey, or as the narrator's assessment that Gabriel needed to set out on a journey that he would probably not make.

The difficulty of reading this closing section, however, is that even if one attributes consciousness to Gabriel, the poetic and vague nature of the language makes it difficult to interpret his thoughts in any meaningful way. For example, it is unclear whether his journey westward" indicates a new desire on

Gabriel's part to study Irish language and culture, or whether it represents a desire for death, and a return to the dark mutinous Shannon waves."

In spite of Tate's confident assertion of Gabriel's sudden revelation of his egoistic relation to his wife," the passage suggests that Gabriel's thoughts are far from clear, and that even he himself is uncertain of what he is feeling. We are told that Gabriel watched sleepily" and that he swooned slowly," two phrases that suggest impaired judgment rather than heightened awareness. The snow, which drifts" vaguely and faintly," seems less a symbol of anything definite than a symbol of Gabriel's vague and disconnected thoughts.

The snow, then, becomes a sort of symbol of indeterminateness itself. The snow falls on all the living and the dead," which are joined together symbolically, and as Gabriel's thoughts fade slowly into unconsciousness, uniting him with the dead, the reader, too, is drawn into the paralytic charms of symbolic language. For the reader, Gabriel's consciousness becomes indistinguishable from the narrator, just as the living becomes indistinguishable from the dead, and the reader is left to hover indecisively, like the drifting, falling snow.

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