



PAUL SIMPSON'S PERSPECTIVE ON DRAMATIC POETRY: TENNYSON'S ULYSSES

Lina Ali Baanoon

English Department, Basrah University

College of Education of Human Sciences

la2904681@gmail.com

A B S T R A C T

This study examines the effectiveness of Paul Simpson's Model in analysing James Joyce's "Ulysses" as a narrative. Ulysses is primarily a dramatic monologue, yet it also functions as a narrative. It tells a complete story, complete with plot, character development, conflict, and setting, all from the king's point of view. The poem's narrative aspects make it valuable not just for its poetry but also for its storytelling. Thus, it can be considered a narrative.

According to my understanding, Paul Simpson is concerned with this very thing: the question of the relationship between language and ideology; language is a Medium of Ideology, and it bears and transmits ideological meaning. Most importantly, he maintained that language is not more than an expression and reinforcement of social structure and belief. Critical Linguistics and Discourse Analysis, on the other hand, reveal the influence of social and political contexts on language use, the way language shapes itself, and the form of language utterances and written texts, which in turn produce ideology and how language aligns with power relations over social relations.

K E Y W O R D S

Ideology, narrative
Structure, discourse
analysis,
intertextuality, and
Context.

Introduction

Case study: This article examines Alfred, Lord Tennyson's poetry, which reflects the spirit of the Victorian era. Tennyson's "Ulysses" will be analysed according to Paul Simpson's Model, which analyses poetry as "dramatic poetry," exploring the dynamics of language to analyse narrative poetry through various dimensions, focusing on how language reflects ideological meanings.

Case description: Paul Simpson's model provides a framework for analysing narrative poetry through various dimensions and levels of analysis, including Language as a Tool, and Resistance and Challenge. This analysis emphasises narrative structures and the linguistic choices that impact the representation of social realities.

Materials and Methods

1. Ideology:

Ideologies are the beliefs and values that shape an individual's interpretation of the world. This informs one's perspectives and influences the use of language. According to Simpson, ideologies are neither abstract concepts nor vague terms that merely inhabit the world; they exist in the discourse language.

2. Language as a Tool:

Language is a precondition for the existence of ideologies, and as their carrier, language can either fortify or undermine an ideology. One might make such studies by reanalysing words, metaphors, or aspects of discourse techniques.

3. Narrative Structure:

The narrative is the epicenter of Simpson's analysis. The structures of stories and the impact of narratives on the shaping of ideologies are then explored. Within a narrative, it is often the case that narrators and characters who are given voice are usually represented ideologically.

4. Discourse Analysis:

Simpson emphasises that discourses must be assessed at both micro and macro scales: the level of words and phrases (micro) and larger patterns of discourse and societal narrative (macro).

5. Intertextuality and Context:

Intertextuality is an essential concept within the framework of Simpson, which acknowledges that other texts and contexts influence and shape texts. Language, therefore, does not exist in isolation; it is a reflection of broader social, political, and historical contexts that nourish ideological meanings.

6. Resistance and Challenge:

The Simpson's model provides a framework for studying resistance to ideologies. Language can counter-hegemonic narratives, provide alternate points of view, and articulate the voices of the marginalised. Through counter-narratives, individuals and groups can analyse dominant ideologies.

To illustrate how to apply Simpson's model, consider the following steps:

1. Text Selection: Choose a text or narrative (e.g. a novel, political speech, or media article) for analysis.
2. Identify Ideological Stances: Examine the central ideologies presented in the text and how they are conveyed through language.
3. Analyze Language Use: Closely examine vocabulary, metaphors, and syntactic choices. How do these choices reinforce or sabotage ideological constructs of interest?
4. Examine Narrative Structure: Analyze character construction, narrative voice, and plot development. Who is given agency in the narrative? Whose voices are privileged or silenced?
5. Contextualize the Discourse: Examine the social, historical, and political factors surrounding the production of the book. In what manner did these surroundings influence the language and ideology?
6. Look for Counter-Narratives: Identify the moments when opposing ideologies are present. How does the use of language provide an avenue for resistance against those dominant narratives?

The steps demonstrate that Simpson's model was applied accordingly to analyse the complex relationships between language and ideology, foregrounding the power of narrative to create, uphold, and contest social beliefs and values. Consequently, the study of language would be an examination of the larger ideological terrains and landscapes it inhabits.

The Functional Analysis of Alfred Tennyson's "Ulysses" as a narrative

A critical overview of Alfred, Lord Tennyson's (1809-1892) poem "Ulysses" can be conducted by examining various aspects of the functional analysis of narrative apparatus, including key elements such as character, theme, structure, and language. We will discuss the structural dissection of the poem in these contexts to analyse its functioning as a narrative.

1. Overview of the Narrative

"Ulysses" is a dramatic monologue that evokes the emotions and internal cognitive states of the character Ulysses (Odysseus) as he reflects on returning to Ithaca, where he finds restlessness and dissatisfaction with the monotony of life as a king. The narrative recounts Ulysses' desire to experience something different from his previous adventures, illustrating that this was not the situation in which he lived at the time.

2. Character Analysis

Ulysses: A protagonist who is heroic and desires experience and knowledge. He is a multi-layered character who represents a blend of classical hero virtues and flaws. His desire for adventure speaks to humankind's aspirations, and to the quest for meaning in life itself.

Telemachus: and this is the opposite of his restlessness, for he takes responsibilities and seems happy to rule Ithaca, which means a duality of duty and desire. In this way, we see the conflict inside Ulysses and his definition of power.

3. Themes

The Search for Meaning: This remains the quest for a purpose beyond the confines of one's home. Ulysses' declaration, "it little profits that an idle king," is the human desire to "sail beyond the sunset," a metaphor for the quest for knowledge, adventure, and a meaningful life.

Time and Mortality: The reflection of the poem lies in the time, which ultimately leads to mortality. Ulysses feels acutely aware of growing older and seeks new experiences in life that would invigorate his spirit and defy time.

Action vs. Inaction: Ulysses expressed disdain for an inactive life, citing the complacency and conventionality it entailed. Such is his restlessness that it urges him to seek new experiences.

4. Structure

Dramatic Monologue: This poem is written in the form of a dramatic monologue, where the thought process of Ulysses is presented directly to the reader. Such a structure gives intimacy and immediacy by involving readers in Ulysses' defining moment.

Stanza Form: The poem consists of stanzas with varying numbers of lines, creating a rhythmic rise and fall that mirrors Ulysses' emotional state. Enjambment also lends urgency to the statements in the description of feelings.

5. Use of Language

Imagery: Tennyson employs striking imagery to portray the world in breathtaking beauty, evoking a desire for adventure. The phrases "to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield" encapsulate Ulysses' spirit of adventure and adamant determination.

Symbolism: The sea imagery connotes discovery and the unknown, symbolising Ulysses' yearning for liberation from the mundane shackles.

Tone: The tone of the poem fluctuates between reminiscence and nostalgia and an almost feverish impulse. This splendidly captures the limbo between the tortured soul of Ulysses and his burning aspiration to be liberated from the shackles of life as it is now.

6. Narrative Function

The poem explores the complexities of human nature, particularly the tension between our obligations and desires. Tennyson appears to take his words beyond Ulysses, projecting them onto the universal human experience. This work may encourage readers to delve deeply into their own lives and pursue a fulfilled purpose.

Methodology

Data Analysis

The critical analysis of Alfred, Lord Tennyson's "Ulysses" using Paul Simpson's model. The analysis of ideological stances, the use of language, narrative structure, contextualisation, and counter-narratives will be illustrated through examples from the text.

1. Ideological Stances

Central Ideologies:

Heroism and Individualism: The poem conveys the impact of the hero's ceaseless search for meaning, and Ulysses embodies that incessantly wandering spirit of exploration. He has the tension of a king with a thirst for adventure, thus creating a dilemma between duty and personal aspiration.

Conveyance Through Language:

The loud voice in response to the traveler's query. Instead, Ulysses's words

"I cannot rest from travel"—underline the central ideology of individual ambition over societal roles, prioritising experience over subsistence.

This is reinforced by the fact that the poem repeats the phrase "I", which emphasises the individual's experience and personal yearning, rather than prioritising the collective.

2. Analyze Language Use

Lexicon:

Tennyson employs dynamic and emotive diction that conveys action and movement, exemplified by a series of words including "strive," "seek," and "find." This language suggests determination combined with yearning for life. Those vivid descriptors, such as "thorny" and "blow," speak to the struggles and rewards of questing.

Metaphors:

The metaphor of the sea symbolises both the potential for adventure and the unpredictability of life itself. For example, Ulysses expresses his desire to "sail beyond the sunset" — this conveys physical journeying and symbolises a pursuit of knowledge, immortality, and transcendence over mortality.

The sea represents both the possibilities for adventure and the chaos of life. For example, Ulysses expresses his desire to go beyond sunset; this indicates a physical journey and symbolises a journey of knowledge, immortality, and transcendence beyond mortality.

The emotions in his heart would be the chasing of dreams and adventure. The actual line compares the element of travel metaphorically to the night. Desiring to explore places unknown even in death.

Syntactic Choices:

The poem employs the kind of imperatives that develop the entire argument of the poem. This is evident in such a line: 'To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.' The positivity, tone, and sentiment are immediately ready to rally support for the ideology of persistence and perseverance. Such a syntactical choice almost highlights the whole philosophy under which Ulysses's character operates, which is that yielding would be tantamount to failure.

Those imperative structures draw the poem forward into a telling line, such as "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield." The positivity, tone, and sentiment are immediately prepared to rally support for that ideology of persistence and perseverance. Such a syntactical choice almost emphasises the whole philosophy under which Ulysses's character operates - one who believes that yielding would mean failure.

3. Examine Narrative Structure

Character Construction:

Ulysses appears to be a restless and somewhat meditative character, torn between recalling his past adventures and his ennui in the present. However, other characters like Telemachus seem responsible and grounded, embodying those uninspiring yet seemingly worthwhile aspects of life.

Narrative Voice:

In the first-person mode, the poem privileges Ulysses's subjective experience. This makes the engagement of readers with Ulysses's thoughts and feelings even more intimate. It sheds all the more weight upon his lonely quest for meaning.

Agency:

Ulysses does not want a passive kingship and therefore chooses adventure, with its inherent uncertainty. The supplication to "follow knowledge like a sinking star" is deliberate, as it positions him as an active decision-maker and, hence, a protagonist in search of fulfillment.

Prioritised Voices:

Ulysses has the dominant voice in the poem, whereas others, such as Telemachus, have a minimal presence. Telemachus, who signifies duty and stability, is himself acknowledged merely as Ulysses's eventual successor, cementing this more active portrayal of Ulysses.

4. Contextualize the Discourse

Social, Historical, and Political Contexts:

It was written in the Victorian period, when the British Empire was expanding, and when all knowledge and adventure were romanticised; "Ulysses" embodies that age in the same embrace of exploration and innovation ideals. Tennyson's discourses convey a yearning for broader experiences beyond the prescribed conventionality of one's duties, amid society's campaign toward domesticity. It is the great Industrial Revolution and the progress that science and philosophy have brought that envision man's idea of forward pace, and that in the quest for knowledge through whatever means it may come. Exploration, to a great extent, appears to be linked to nationalistic personal ambition.

5. Look for Counter-Narratives

Instances of Alternative Ideologies:

The poem primarily explores the acknowledgment of alternative ideologies derived from Ulysses's reflections on Telemachus. The father longs to sail for new adventures, but the son appears more as a foil- a picture of stability, governance, and domesticity. In the father's section of respect, his son is referred to as "He is my son, and he is a good man," thereby somewhat recognising and respecting domesticity. Yet these values are outshone by his desire for adventure.

Facilitation of Resistance:

In his conflicting traits, as a protagonist who embodies self-dependence on the one hand, and his acknowledgment of his son Telemachus on the other, Ulysses carries what seems to be the kernel of tension within this particular narrative. Thus, phrases such as "I am a part of all that I have met" indicate that Ulysses truly recognizes the contributions of others to his identity, thereby hinting almost covertly at the one-in-all heroism.

Conclusion

A closer examination of Tennyson's "Ulysses" based on Paul Simpson's model sheds light on the confusion surrounding ideologies of heroism, individualism, and the search for meaning. The poem portrays the conflict between personal ambition and social obligation. Concerning language and structure, Tennyson interweaves a silken description of the adventurous spirit with an acceptance of duty and the complexities of the human condition. This multifaceted view allows further contemplation upon the character of Ulysses and the ramifications of his journey.

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