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STYLE AND THE TECHNIQUE OF THE NOVEL «ULYSSES»

Abstract. *This article contains information about the styles and techniques of the novel ‘Ulysses’ written by modernist writer James Joyce. Furthermore, the framework of the novel is compared to one of the most influential and famous work of the world literature, the Odyssey, by Homer.*

Keywords: *Ulysses, Odyssey, Leopold Bloom, Lestrygonians, allusions, symbols, Jungian archetypes, stream-of-consciousness technique.*

The plot and theme of James Joyce's *Ulysses* center on life as a journey. Joyce based the framework of his novel on the structure of one of the greatest and most influential works in world literature, *The Odyssey*, by Homer. In this epic poem of ancient Greece, Homer presented the journey of life as a heroic adventure. The protagonist of this epic tale, Odysseus (Roman name, *Ulysses*), encounters many perils—including giants, angry gods, and monsters—during his voyage home to Ithaca, Greece, after the Trojan War. In Joyce's 20th Century novel, the author also depicts life as a journey, in imitation of Homer. But Joyce presents this journey as humdrum, dreary, and uneventful.

Joyce's *Ulysses* is a Jew of Hungarian origin, Leopold Bloom, who lives in Dublin, Ireland. His adventure consists of getting breakfast, feeding his cat, going to a funeral, doing legwork for his job, visiting pubs or restaurants, and thinking about his unfaithful wife. His activities parallel in some way the adventures of Homer's *Ulysses*. An example is Bloom's attendance at a funeral in a chapter entitled "Hades."

This chapter parallels an episode in *The Odyssey* in which *Ulysses* visits Hades, the land of the dead (or Underworld) in Greek mythology. Bloom's unfaithful wife, Molly, represents the faithful wife of *Ulysses*, Penelope. A young aspiring writer, Stephen Dedalus, represents the son of *Ulysses*, Telemachus, who searches for his father. Although Dedalus is not Bloom's son, Dedalus nonetheless is depicted as searching for a father figure to replace his own drunken father.

The action in Joyce's novel takes place in Dublin, Ireland, and the shore east of Dublin on the Irish Sea. The entire story unfolds on June 16, 1904, except for a few hours on the morning of June 17. Joyce chose June 16 as the date for most of the action in the novel as a kind of commemoration of the day when he met his inamorata, Nora Barnacle.

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Ulysses has three main sections, as follows:

Section 1 (Chapters 1-3): The focus is on Stephen Dedalus, a young aspiring writer who has just returned from Paris. This section presents Stephen's life on a typical day in which he finds Dublin depressing. He is pessimistic about realizing his dream to become a published author.³

Section 2 (Chapters 4-15): The focus is on Leopold Bloom, a Jewish advertising representative. This section presents his voyage through an ordinary day in Dublin. Joyce describes in detail both Dublin and Bloom, presenting his free-flowing thoughts—many of them either about his unfaithful wife, Molly, or other women.

Section 3 (Chapters 16-18): The focus is on Leopold, Stephen, and Molly. Bloom and Dedalus meet each other. Dedalus goes to Bloom's home and talks with him for several hours. The novel ends with a chapter on Molly. It consists of more than 30 pages occupied by seven sentences with no punctuation except for the period at the end of the novel.

Telemachus: The narrator introduces Stephen Dedalus, representing Homer's Telemachus, along with friends of Dedalus.

Nestor: Stephen teaches a lesson in Greek at a school where an elderly man, Garrett Deasy, is headmaster. Deasy represents *The Odyssey's* King Nestor of Pylos (or Pílos), a wise advisor to the Greeks during the Trojan War. Telemachus visits Nestor in quest of information about his father, who has not returned from Troy. Joyce uses Deasy to parody *The Odyssey*, for Deasy is anything but wise. He even needs Stephen's help with a letter to the editor of *The Evening Telegraph* on foot-and-mouth disease.

Proteus: In Greek mythology, Proteus could change his physical form at will. In Joyce's novel, the language in the "Proteus" chapter exhibits many forms. Calypso: The narrator introduces Leopold Bloom, the protagonist, who is preparing breakfast in his home while his wife sleeps. In *The Odyssey*, Calypso is an immortal nymph and daughter of the Titan Atlas. She lives on an island on which she holds Ulysses as a love captive. Bloom's wife, Molly, represents Calypso in that she holds her husband captive in a marriage even though she is unfaithful to him.

Lotus Eaters: This chapter centers in part on mind-altering substances and on religion (which Marx called "the opium of the people"). In *The Odyssey*, the crewmen from the ship of Ulysses eat lotus plants after they arrive on the northern coast of Africa (present-day Libya). They then lapse into euphoria.

Hades: Leopold Bloom attends a funeral. His confrontation with death parallels the voyage of Ulysses into the Underworld.⁴

Aeolus: In *The Odyssey*, Aeolus was king of the winds and ruler of an island. He gives Ulysses a bag of winds to speed his ship on its journey. In Joyce's

1. Ulysses Plot Summary, Characters and Themes // <http://www.novelguide.com>

2. Attridge Derek. The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce. 2nd Edition. Cambridge Univ. Press. 2004. – 314 p.

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novel, the island of the winds is a newspaper office. Bloom and Dedalus are both there at the same time--Bloom to purchase an advertisement and Dedalus to submit Deasy's letter ("Nestor" chapter). In various conversations, there are references to wind. For example, Professor MacHugh says, "The tribune's words, how led and scattered to the four winds." Other references by different characters include the following: "Reaping the whirlwind," "Gone with the wind," "The sack of windy Troy, "Funny the way those newspaper men veer about when they get wind of a new opening," and "Enough of that inflated windbag."⁵

Lestrygonians (variant spellings: *Laestrygonians*, *Laistrygones*): The Lestrygonians were giants who ate many of Ulysses' men. In this chapter in Joyce's novel, eating also takes place: Bloom eats a gorgonzola cheese sandwich and drinks a glass of burgundy at Davy Byrne's pub. There are also references to cannibalism in a paragraph about food: Sardines on the shelves. Almost taste them by looking. Sandwich? Ham and his descendants mustered and bred there. Potted meats. What is home without Plumtree's potted meat? Incomplete. What a stupid ad! Under the obituary notices they stuck it. All up a plumtree. Dignam's potted meat. Cannibals would with lemon and rice. White missionary too salty. Like pickled pork. Expect the chief consumes the parts of honour. Ought to be tough from exercise.⁶

Scylla and Charybdis: In *The Odyssey*, Scylla is a six-headed monster poised on a rock on one side of a strait. It eats men from the ship of Ulysses as it passes by. Charybdis is a whirlpool near the opposite side that will swallow the ship if it veers too close. At the National Library, Stephen discusses Shakespeare's relationship with his wife, claiming she was unfaithful. Her activity, he says, influenced Shakespeare's writing, notably in *Hamlet*. Dedalus's friends challenge his views (perhaps the way Scylla and Charybdis challenged Ulysses). Dedalus also challenges their views, like a a monster such as Scylla. Bloom is elsewhere in the library conducting research.

Wandering Rocks: This chapter focuses on characters who wander through Dublin.⁷

Sirens: While Bloom dines in the Ormond Hotel, he ogles attractive barmaids representing the Sirens in *The Odyssey*.

Cyclops: In a pub, a man called "the citizen" insults Bloom with anti-Semitic language. Because of his stupidity and blind prejudice, he parallels *The Odyssey's* cyclops, a one-eyed giant.

Nausicca: In this chapter, Bloom encounters a lame young girl, Gerty MacDowell, who solicits him. She represents—in a mundane, ordinary way—the beautiful maiden Nausicaa, who escorts Ulysses to the court of her father, Alcinous, the king of the Phaeacians. The lameness of Gerty may symbolize what

3.Hamilton Geoff.Encyclopaedia of Popular Fiction.Facts on File. 2009. – 412 p.

4.Fletcher R.H. A History of English Literature. 2007, p.48

5.Eysteinson, Astradur, *The Concept of Modernism*, Ithaca, NY:1992 , p.76

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Joyce believes is the lameness of organized religion.⁸*Oxen of the Sun*: Bloom goes to the National Maternity Hospital on Holles Street to check on his friend, Mrs. Mina Purefoy, who gives birth. There, he encounters Dedalus. Dedalus and Buck Mulligan are having a drink with medical students who are friends of Mulligan. The language Joyce uses in this chapter ranges from Old English to modern English as Joyce traces the English language from gestation to birth. A reference to oxen (which include domesticated cows and bulls) occurs in this chapter when discussions of a newspaper account (Deasy's letter) say that diseased cattle may have to be killed. " 'Tis all about Kerry cows that are to be butchered along of the plague," says a character named Frank.

Also, a newly born calf is spoken of in the same paragraph in which the birth of a human is discussed:

"It should perhaps be stated that staggering bob in the vile parlance of our lowerclass licensed victuallers signifies the cookable and eatable flesh of a calf newly dropped from its mother. In a recent public controversy with Mr L. Bloom (Pubb. Canv.) which took place in the commons' hall of the National Maternity Hospital, 29, 30 and 31 Holles street, of which, as is well known, Dr A. Horne (Lic. in Midw., F. K. Q. C. P. I.) is the able and popular master, he is reported by eyewitnesses as having stated that once a woman has let the cat into the bag (an esthete's allusion, presumably, to one of the most complicated and marvellous of all nature's processes) she must let it out again or give it life, as he phrased it, to save her own. At the risk of her own, was the telling rejoinder of his interlocutor, none the less effective for the moderate and measured tone in which it was delivered".

Circe: Dedalus and Bloom visit a brothel operated by Bella Cohen, the parallel of *The Odyssey's* Circe, a sorceress-temptress.

Eumaeus: Bloom and Dedalus go to a cabman's shelter to eat. There, they encounter a drunken sailor, D. B. Murphy of Carrigaloe, who has traveled the world, like Ulysses, and is expected soon to reunite with his wife.

Ithaca: Dedalus goes with Bloom to the latter's home, where they continue their conversation. In Homer's *Odyssey*, Ithaca is the home of Ulysses, to which he returns after many years at sea. Among the major events in this chapter are conversation and a urination scene in the back yard. Although Bloom invites Dedalus to stay for the night, Dedalus goes home. The chapter is written in the style of a Roman Catholic catechism.

Penelope: This chapter enters the mind of Bloom's wife, Molly, and presents her thoughts in 24,195 words and only one punctuation mark, a period at the end of the chapter.

The author writes in third-person point of view with frequent use of allusions, symbols, Jungian archetypes, literary archetypes, pastiche, and the

⁶.Attridge Derek. The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce.2nd Edition.Cambridge Univ. Press.2004. – 314 p.

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stream-of-consciousness technique, all of which make the novel difficult to comprehend for even the most intelligent and informed readers.

In stream of consciousness, a term coined by American psychologist William James (1842-1910), an author portrays a character's continuing "stream" of thoughts as they occur, regardless of whether they make sense or whether the next thought in a sequence relates to the previous thought. (See the last paragraph of the plot summary for an example.) These thought portrayals expose a character's memories, fantasies, apprehensions, fixations, ambitions, rational and irrational ideas, and so on.

In the last chapter of the novel, consisting of eight long paragraphs, Joyce omits punctuation entirely in order to mimic the uninterrupted flow of naked thoughts. Joyce also uses numerous sentences and phrases from Latin, French, German, Spanish, Russian (transliterated), Italian, and other languages. In addition, he uses refined language, vulgar language, slang and demotic dialogue, gibberish, coined words such as *noctambules* for night walkers (*nocturalambulators*) and *circumjacent* for *surrounding closely*, passages in all-capital letters, unpunctuated sentences, and abbreviations (such as H. R. H., rear admiral, the right honourable sir Hercules Hannibal Habeas Corpus Anderson, K. G., K. P., K. T., P. C., K. C. B., M. P, J. P., M. B., D. S. O., S. O. D., M. F. H., M. R. I. A., B. L., Mus. Doc., P. L. G., F. T. C. D., F. R. U. I., F. R. C. P. I. and F. R. C. S. I.

Another technique he uses is to combine two words into one to create a single adjective and sometimes a noun. Examples are the following:

1. *dangerouslooking, hocuspocus, fifenotes, jogjaunty, deepmoved, muchtreasured, dogbiscuits, snotgreen, rosegardens, shrilldeep, canarybird, freefly, allimportant, gigglegold, candleflame, and grassplots.*

He also writes one chapter in the format of a stage play, another in the format of a Roman Catholic catechism, and another in language ranging from Old English to modern English.

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2. John Ryan. A Bash in the Tunnel (Brighton: Clifton Books 1970), essays on James Joyce by Irish writers, namely Patrick Kavanagh, Flann O'Brien (Brian O'Nolan), Samuel Beckett, Ulick O'Connor & Edna O'Brien; expanded from: Envoy, April 1951, Vol. 5, No. 17.
3. Jordan Anthony J. " Arthur Griffith with James Joyce & WB Yeats - Liberating Ireland". - Westport Books 2013. 224 p.
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5. Ulysses Plot Summary, Characters and Themes // <http://www.novelguide.com>