

# Symbols in James Joyce's Ulysses

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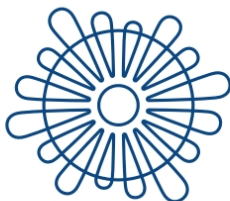
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Odjel za anglistiku

Preddiplomski sveučilišni studij engleskog jezika i književnosti (dvopredmetni)

**Ana Majčica**

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Završni rad

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Zadar, 2017.



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## 1. Introduction

James Augustine Aloysius Joyce was born on February 2, 1882 in Dublin, Ireland. When he entered University College, Dublin and after his review of the play *When We Dead Awaken* by *Henrik Ibsen*, which was published in 1900, Joyce made a resolution to become a writer. “In 1914 he published his first book *Dubliners* which is a collection of 15 short stories about Dublin and people’s life there. This was soon followed by his second book *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man* which is a coming-of-age novel based on autobiographical facts” (Britannica). After that Joyce dedicated next eight years to writing *Ulysses* which was published in 1922 in Paris and later would prove to be his landmark novel. In 1939, he wrote another great novel *Finnegan’s Wake* in which he also used his experimental form of language. Due to health issues James Joyce died on January 13, 1941. Although the action in his novels takes place in Dublin, Joyce himself spent many years in self-imposed exile. According to Frank Budgen, in Europe “Joyce found artistic freedom that he could not find in Dublin” (2). Even though he did not live in Ireland for many years, all events in his novels are geographically correct. Joyce left Ireland, but Ireland never left him.

In this paper I am going to use an analytical method in order to analyse myths, metaphors and allusions in Joyce’s *Ulysses*. I will draw parallels between *Odyssey* as a classical epic and *Ulysses* as a modern one. Besides the fact that *Ulysses* shares many similarities with *Odyssey*, it is also rich in references from the historical period in which it was written. The main goal of this paper work is to show that *Ulysses* is not just a modern day *Odyssey*, but rather a novel that deals with themes such as politics, history, religion and love. The dominant theme is life as an adventure. The novel’s construction is based on Homer’s *Odyssey*. It is divided in eighteen episodes, each one reflecting an episode from *Odyssey*. All of the action of the novel takes place on a single day in Dublin, where we follow the adventures of the main characters. A modern day Odysseus is Leopold Bloom, a middle-aged

Jew who works in a local advertisement agency. The younger protagonist is Stephen Dedalus who bears Joyce's biographical characteristics. He is an intellectual who failed as a poet and lives in exile. Throughout the novel, he searches for a father figure that he finds in Leopold. Another main character is Molly, Leopold's wife, who represents modern day Penelope. In the course of that ordinary day, the main characters can be seen doing errands and wandering all over the city. Their adventures consist of daily routines that everyone does, but Joyce turns them into a heroic adventure. Using stream of consciousness technique, Joyce presented the inner mind of characters and their vivid imagination. The majority of adventures that happen throughout the novel are just a product of their imagination.

## 2. On Joyce's *Ulysses* and Homer's *Odyssey*: Comparative reading

Along with his other works, *Ulysses* is considered one of the greatest modernist novels. Modernist literature brings out the limitations of language as a form of communication. Colin MacCabe gives an excellent insight into Joyce experimented with language as well as with various styles of writing through shifting narrative styles and points of view from one chapter to another. "*Ulysses* is based on exploration of consciousness and the inner life of characters" (10). Joyce created a modern epic using the elements of mystical creatures and events from Homer's *Odyssey* and placing them into everyday life in Dublin. It displays a modernist scepticism regarding the linear arrangement of events in traditional novels showing that time is not a strict progression of cause to effect.

*Ulysses* can be divided in three parts. The first part deals with psychology and inner thoughts of Stephen Dedalus. The second part can be described as an experiment with different styles as well as different genres in literature. And lastly, the third part goes back to inner monologue and the stream-of-consciousness. "A quarter after what an unearthly hour I suppose theyre just getting up in China now combing out their pigtails for the day well soon

have the nuns ringing the angelus theyve nobody coming in to spoil their sleep...“(Joyce 664). Although the novel can be seen as a modern epic and draws on Homer’s epic, it is not the epic as such. Homer’s epic was meant to be passed on mouth-to-mouth rather than written down, which would be difficult to do with *Ulysses* due to its stream-of-consciousness technique.

In *Odyssey*, ten years after the fall of Troy, we follow the adventures of the great Greek hero Odysseus who has still not returned to his homeland Ithaca. A large group of suitors, believing Odysseus to be dead, has moved into his palace, in order to win his faithful wife Penelope. Penelope, hoping that her husband Odysseus is still alive, tries to stall the suitors by making them an idle promise: “she will choose a husband among them when she finishes weaving a burial cloth” (Hamilton 52). However, when alone at night, Penelope secretly undoes the work of the cloth so that the fabrication will go on indefinitely. Prince Telemachus, Odysseus’s son, wants desperately to throw suitors out but does not have the confidence or experience to fight them. Throughout the epic we follow Odysseus’ adventures in his attempt to go back home. As well as having mystical creatures, there are also themes such as father-son relationship represented through Telemachus’ effort to follow his father’s footsteps. These are the basic ideas of the storyline that inspired Joyce to write *Ulysses*. Using these and many other motifs, he created a modern version of *Odyssey*.

At first glance it looks like the chapters in *Ulysses* were written without any order, because of the chaos caused by various styles of writing in them. However, if we read Joyce’s directions given to us through allusions we will be able to find a structural pattern in which he rewrote *Odyssey*. The story is not told from a consistent and reliable point of view, but rather as a parallel between ancient mythology and modern world. Homer wrote about a journey of a hero which is full of adventures, mystical creatures and dangers, while Joyce wrote about a



journey of an ordinary Jewish man, whose life consists of eating, working, visiting pubs, thinking about his unfaithful wife or going to a funeral.

The modern Ulysses finds himself in trivialities of daily life and is represented as a cuckold. Ulysses and Leopold stand on the opposite ends. While latter is a citizen who is unsure about his position in society and constantly escapes into his imaginary world in order to find a shelter from reality, the former is a heroic warrior, confident and adventurous:” Mr Leopold Bloom ate with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls. He liked thick giblet soup, nutty gizzards, a stuffed roast heart, liverslices fried with crustcrumbs, fried hencods' roes“ (Joyce 46). However, the everyday challenges that Leopold is being faced with also represent challenges for Joyce because narration never settles on just one style of writing but is rather constantly changing. As an example, we have newspaper headlines that appear in the middle of conversations in the *Aeolus* chapter:

“In the Heart of the Hibernian Metropolis  
BEFORE NELSON'S PILLAR TRAILS SLOWED, SHUNTED, CHANGED  
TROLLEY, started for Blackrock, Kingstown and Dalkey, Clonskea, Rathgar and  
Terenure, Palmerston park and upper Rathmines, Sandymount Green, Rathmines,  
Ringsend and Sandymount Tower, Harold's Cross. The hoarse Dublin United  
Tramway Company's timekeeper bawled them off:

-- Rathgar and Terenure!

-- Come on, Sandymount Green!“ (105).

The adventures through which our characters go through are provided by their imagination, but just because it happens inside their minds it does not mean that it is not real.

Although it was firstly intended to be just a short story in *Dubliners*, *Ulysses* developed into Joyce's most important work. *Ulysses* is constructed of 18 chapters/episodes as a modern parallel to Homer's *Odyssey* reflecting its 18 episodes. All the action of the novel

takes place in Dublin “on a single day on June 16, 1904 which is the day when Joyce met his wife Nora” (Balmire 10). The main protagonists of the novel are failed poet Stephen Dedalus, who is also the main character of Joyce’s earlier autobiographical work *Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*, the Jewish advertisement writer Leopold Bloom and his unfaithful wife, Molly Bloom. The three of them can be seen as modern counterparts of Telemachus, Ulysses and Penelope, respectively. Joyce uses interior monologue in order to reveal the innermost thoughts and feelings of these characters as they live hour by hour throughout the book.

### 3. The Influence of Ancient Greek on *Ulysses* as a modern epic

The classical epic is generally defined as “a long narrative poem about one great subject” (Hamilton 5). It is centered on a heroic figure on whose actions the fate of a nation depends. The traditional epics were written in a form of a poem in order to be easily remembered and passed on. Many epics begin in medias res and with an evocation of a muse: “Tell me, O Muse, of the man of many devices, who wandered full many ways after he had sacked the sacred citadel of Troy” (Homer 1). During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, writers got interested in plot-lines, themes and ideas that were used in Ancient Greece. “This resulted in many stories that share similarities with ancient epics” (Hamilton 1). Although, those are mainly themes such as hope that good will win over evil, these stories based on ancient literature are actually trying to find an answer to society’s fundamental questions about the meaning of life. A modern epic takes some of the fundamental characteristics from classical epics, although in most cases action does not last for a long period of time such as a few decades, but it is rather a shorter period.

The plot of *Ulysses* does not develop like one would expect from a novel. It just goes on its own journey full of adventures disguised in allusions and metaphors. Even though it is a modern epic, it does not bear all the elements of the epic. On the one hand it begins in media

res; we have an invocation of a goddess, unity of action and a central character: “He held the bowl aloft and intoned: —*Introibo ad altare Dei*“(Joyce 1). On the other hand, the action takes place during one single day; and it does not stretch over a larger time period like in classical epics. It does not reach any conclusion at the end and yet it does not leave a reader without one. The plot of *Ulysses* resembles Homer’s *Odyssey* in a way that it gives us an adventure of a modern hero presented to us as an ordinary man Leopold Bloom who goes through a process of maturation.

As mentioned before, the plot can be described as modern *Odyssey*; therefore it has many mythological allusions and metaphors. For example, there is a mentioning of a racing horse which is actually a reference to the Trojan horse. Joyce was greatly influenced by Greek literature, mythology and philosophy. Therefore, we do not just have the allusions to mythology and modern epic inspired by *Odyssey*, but ancient philosophy as well. MacCabe gives an biographical example of how Joyce was fascinated with the character of Ulysses and considered him to be so perfect:

“Ulysses is both. I see him from all sides, and therefore he is all-round in the sense of your sculptor’s figure. But he is a complete man as well—a good man. Ulysses is son to Laertes, but he is father to Telemachus, husband to Penelope, lover of Calypso, companion in arms of the Greek warriors around Troy, and King of Ithaca. He was subjected to many trials, but with wisdom and courage came through them all (32).

From this quote it can be seen that Joyce was fascinated with Greek myths.

As well as having allusions to Greek mythology it has many metaphors referring to modern times, such as Shakespeare’s texts. “He proves by algebra that Hamlet’s grandson is Shakespeare’s grandfather and that he himself is the ghost of his own father “(15). Ellmann claims that this proves how “there are many ways to read *Ulysses*, not just because of its metaphors and allusions but also because of its autobiographical elements” in recreation of a

life in Dublin on a particular day Joyce himself walked through (10). The character of Stephen is based on Joyce himself. For example, Stephen hopes that he will do something big in ten years time, which is an allusion to the fact that Joyce wrote *Ulysses* in ten years.

#### 4. Father-son relationship in *Ulysses* and *Odyssey*

There is also another reoccurring motif in both story lines, and that is the father-son relationship. This theme “is a completely abstract literary theme which becomes symbolic through application. It is abstract as there is no real or immediate impact on the narration rather the understanding paves a way for readers to place it in relation to the time sequence“ (Shoily 15). In Homeric version, the son Telemachus, goes on a search for his father Ulysses, in order to help him come back home while at the same time searching for his identity because due to him not knowing his father, his journey is based on the tracks left by Odysseus. In a modern version, we have Leopold and Stephen who act as father-son figures respectably. Stephen’s journey is guided by the need of a shelter and his hopeless situation. However, his identity is not build upon his father’s image, but rather he is already given his central position in the previous Joyce’s novel *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*. He does not have the burden of his father’s history, but he has an individual space to define his own history and to create future. During his journey, he is constantly in a conflict within himself, “torn between religion and existential tinge to the psyche” (Shoily 63). Leopold and Stephen both use everyday objects to help them cope with their inner anxiety, both escape to the world inside their minds when found in situations where their presence is being ignored by the others. Stephen has the lack of authority in his life, with his mother dead and no father figure, while Leopold is looking for somebody to be father to.

Among many various motives that Joyce used in *Ulysses*, there is one that connects Leopold and Stephen in their father-son relationship, and that is Shakespeare. Hodgart claims

that, in the episode *Scylla and Charybdis*, “Stephen presents his analysis of *Hamlet* which is influenced by his lack of connection to origin and leads him into existential crisis” (15). On the other hand, when Leopold is confronted with death at the funeral, he seems to be at peace accepting that it is all over when you are dead and it becomes an inescapable truth for him: “Funerals all over the world everywhere every minute. Shovelling them under by the cartload doublequick. Thousands every hour. Too many in the world” (Joyce 91). He is left with the thought that the only thing his father left him upon his death is a suicide letter. In this episode Joyce defined Leopold, Stephen and Molly using *Hamlet* to create circumstances in which their paths will cross, and they will become the murdered father, the dispossessed son and the guilty mother, respectably.

However, it is not the *Circe* episode that this father-son bond is realized. “In episode Nine, Stephen explains his views of fathers as inconsequential and that paternity is unprovable and therefore unsubstantial- fathers are linked to their children only by a brief sexual act” (Shoily 64). Here Stephen’s premise came to contradiction because he stated that father can not be a friend to the son, but their bond is built through friendship. They have found themselves and each other in the chaos of reality. Although Leopold and Stephen share many similarities, there are also many differences between them. For example, Leopold is kind to the others, which can be seen in the way of how he cares for drunken Stephen: “(*He bends again and undoes the buttons of Stephen’s waistcoat*) To breathe. (*He brushes the woodshavings from Stephen’s clothes with light hand and fingers*)” (Joyce 503).

## 5. Ulysses

The first episode is entitled Telemachus, after the son of Ulysses and Penelope. He leaves his castle because it is occupied by young men who want to win Penelope’s heart and crown. Telemachus goes on a journey guided by a desire to find his father in order not to feel as a disrespected son in his own castle anymore; “– all of you, destroyed in my housewhile I

go scot-free myself” (Homer 15). The novel begins at 8 am on June 16, 1904, a few miles outside of Dublin where Stephen Dedalus and Buck Mulligan are at the Martello Tower. The episode opens with a scene where Mulligan is mockingly imitating the Roman mass, which recurs throughout the chapter, by using his shaving bowl in order to provoke Stephen. During this scene we have the first mentioning of Greek mythology when these two characters begin to discuss the origin of Dedalus’ last name. In Greek mythology, Dedalus was the engineer who built the Labyrinth and then made wax wings to allow him and his son, Icarus, to escape from the island of Crete. “He warned Icarus not to fly too close to the sun, but despite his father’s warning, he flew too close to the sun which caused melting of his wax wings and falling in the sea” (Hamilton 30).

This leads us to the first turning point in the story where, without any forewarning, we have insight in Stephen’s inner thoughts. The image which is constantly present in his mind is his mother’s death. That image haunts him throughout the entire book, especially the scene where she asks him to pray over her, but he refuses. According to Levitt, we can find two major issues discussed in this chapter. Firstly, there is the issue of Irishness which is represented by a few lines from Yeats’ poem and in the character of a milk woman:

“And no more turn aside and brood

Upon love’s bitter mystery;

For Fergus rules the brazen cars,” (7)

Secondly, there is the symbol of usurper which parallels two different relationships. The first one is between Stephen Dedalus and Telemachus in Homer’s *Odyssey*. Stephen is like Telemachus because both of them are surrounded by people that are trying to undermine them. Mulligan takes advantage of Stephen and while doing it, he also mocks everything that Stephen stands or used to stand for. Therefore, Stephen sees Mulligan as a usurper: “A sleek brown head, a seal’s, far out on the water, round. Usurper” (20).

The second relation that can be drawn is that between Dedalus and Hamlet, which is another reoccurring theme. Levitt compares the Martello Tower and its surroundings with the court of Elsinore together with Stephen's insistence to wear black after his mother's death just as Hamlet was persistent to wear black for his father. The mentioning of Stephen's theory about Hamlet introduced us to another reoccurring theme in of *Ulysses*. Throughout the first six episodes the style is a combination of the third person narration and stream of consciousness intertwined. Although the narrative is realistic and straightforward, in most situations it is difficult to distinguish where one ends and the other begins. For example, we have the following description:

“To smell the gentle smoke of tea, fume of the pan, sizzling butter. Be near her ample bcdwarnied flesh. Yes, Yes. Quick warm sunlight came running from Berkeley road, swiftly, in slim sandals, along the brightening footpath. Runs, she runs to meet me, a girl with gold hair on the wind. Two letters and a card lay on the hall floor “(Joyce 53).

We have moved from Leopold's inner thoughts to an object in the real world, without any warning. Joyce builds his inner world of thoughts using layers of sounds, images, scents and fragments of a memory creating complex syntax structures. Furthermore, very often we do not have complete information, but rather just a piece of it, which will be fulfilled later on in the book. In this way it is also possible that some things, which would not normally have direct connection, are connected via character's associations. For example, there are a few episodes, such as *Proteus* and *The Lotus Eaters*, where there is little to no narration but only character's thoughts: “Met her once in the park. In the dark. What a lark. Police tout. Her name and address she then told with my tooraloom tooraloom tay“ (Joyce 61).

The storylines of *Ulysses* and *Odyssey* are parallel in its essential parts. However, its other allusions are incidental in a sense that they are momentary. For example, comparisons

with figures such as Don Giovanni or Pyrrhus are only given once. According to Grifford, “each chapter reflects a matching episode from Homer’s epic” (16). However, they do not correspond in the exact same order, but the beginning and the conclusion do match and the basic plot of the story remains the same. In *Odyssey*, we follow Odysseus in his voyage back home and here we have Leopold Bloom who also wants to return home but at the same time avoids doing so. Odysseus had to go through many dangerous things and had help from his son, while Leopold’s return home is a moral achievement with assistance of a son-like figure Stephen.

This stream of consciousness method that Joyce used provides us with a great deal of information about the character, especially Leopold. Therefore, we have a detailed representation of not only just one moment in time, but characters exact thoughts as well. In this episode, we find Stephen at the beginning of his adventure in search for individualism and a father-like figure. As before mentioned, one of the motives that we find here is the death of Stephen’s mother. Stephen did not obey his mother’s last wish to kneel in front of her, and he is being tormented by that memory, reliving it in his mind to every single detail: “Silently, in a dream she had come to him after her death, her wasted body within its loose brown graveclothes giving off an odour of wax and rosewood, her breath, that had bent upon him, mute, reproachful, a faint odour of wetted ashes “(Joyce 3). At the same time Mulligan mocks him by using his shaving bowl and pretending that it is the chalice and that he is performing the Mass.

In the following episode, Nestor, we get a more detailed image of Stephen and his inner thoughts. Beginning at 10 am in Dalkey school where Stephen is teaching while his mind wanders around, mostly thinking about Aristotle’s metaphysics, which results in him telling jokes to students which only he can understand. This shows his abilities as a teacher and his low opinion of his students. Besides Aristotelian metaphysics, during Stephen’s



stream of consciousness we encounter one of the major themes in *Ulysses* and that is the theme of love when he wonders whether love is the only true thing in life. Throughout this chapter we follow Stephen's inner self-debate about history and how some things could have been different, especially concerning Irish history. Again, there is the motif of his mother's death in form of a riddle about a fox that buries its grandmother. In the same chapter of *Odyssey*, Telemachus goes to see charioteer Nestor who affirms that Telemachus is becoming a man, just as the principal Deasy affirms Stephen's growth by predicting that he will not remain long in the school. However, this is not demonstrated through wisdom as with Nestor, but rather through Deasy's ignorance. Although Nestor was a wise old man, his advice is worthless to Telemachus, just like Deasy gives meaningless advice to Stephen. Homer satirized Nestor and Joyce did the same with Deasy. He has national pride which is outweighed by his anti-Semitism and wrong perception of Irish history.

In the Proteus episode, while Stephen waits for the meeting with Mulligan, he goes to Dublin by a public transportation to a beach and lets his mind roam around using free association. Therefore, it is difficult to separate his inner monologue from the action that is happening in real world. In this chapter, Joyce begins to use his unique style of writing, where the real problem is not to make difference between inner thoughts and real world but rather to follow characters thoughts and understand all the references he makes. His thoughts go back to ancient philosophy idea's about solipsism, materialism and the existence of the external world. He is trying to make a connection between his thoughts and the world around him. Here we see how Stephen is getting more mature. Moreover, we see how alone as a person he actually is, especially when he writes down a poem only to realize that there is no one to read it. Grifford claims that the meaning of this chapter's title is a "metaphor between Proteus and Stephen's thoughts" (22). On one hand, there is Proteus, Poseidon's son who has the ability to change his shape at his own will. On the other, there is Stephen with the same ability applied

to his inner thoughts. Just as Proteus changed the way he appears, Stephen constantly changes his thoughts which makes it difficult to follow. His consciousness changes shapes of the thing that he sees. For example, there is a scene where he sees a dog and his mind changes this dog into a bear or a wolf. Transfiguration occurs even in small details such as material change and themes such as reincarnation. Moreover, Stephen started to change as well.

## 6. An ordinary man as a modern hero

The Calypso episode marks the second part of the book where we finally meet our modern Odysseus, Leopold Bloom. This chapter goes back to 8 am but this time in Leopold Bloom's house. In contrast to Stephen's intellectual mind, we have Leopold Bloom with his child-like thoughts full of imagination and ordinary life. In this chapter, the connection between Leopold and Odyssey is the painting of goddess Calypso which hangs in his bedroom. In the first scene Leopold compares Molly to the goddess on the painting. Odysseus found himself stranded on the island and imprisoned there by a nymph during a period of seven years, keeping him away from Penelope. The nymph offers purity and idealized beauty without the burden of memory of a dead child which haunts Leopold and keeps him away from his wife for several years. The picture of a nymph is hanging on the wall above their bed, and looking down upon them like a mythological creature whose pure essence is beauty in its perfection of desire and love, in contrast to broken marriage, lack of desire and adultery.

Ulysses was trapped for seven years under a spell of a nymph and Leopold lives in a street number seven where he fulfills his wife's requests. This can be seen as another parallel between them. Further on in the novel, Molly represents the Penelope figure in *Ulysses*. However, unlike Penelope who is faithfully waiting for Odysseus to come home, Molly is having an affair and Leopold knows it. This chapter reflects the first chapter in small details that are being mentioned in both of them. For example, in the first episode action takes place

in Martello Tower. There is a scene with milk woman and the mentioning of Alec Bannon. In this episode Leopold wonders if he looks like a tower in his cat's eyes. There is also a milkman and again the mentioning of Bannon. These details might be small, but "they create a parallel between Leopold and Stephen" in moments just before they left and started their adventure (Blamire 55).

When Leopold reads about a colony being set up in Turkey, it represents the idea of Ithaca as a promised land of peace. This is the first episode in which we finally meet our modern hero in a figure of an ordinary man who is busy with everyday trivialities. Leopold might not be on a faraway island in an adventure with mystical creatures, but in his mind he is as far away from home as Odysseus. Although he is in his kitchen making breakfast, his mind is not linked to reality, creating distance between him and the things that surround him. Joyce did not use myth to draw a parallel between Odysseus and Leopold, but to create completely different hero who is shipwrecked in his own way. Blamire claims that each of the episodes represents a relation to one form of art. This episode is a complex one because it represents motives of desire, images of fetishism, appetite and failure in fulfilling one's needs. Moreover, here we see all the differences between Leopold and Stephen. In Leopold's thoughts we can find details that he puts into a larger context, but he stops his thoughts before they become exaggerated. He is presented as a curious man who wanders about ordinary things. On the other hand, Stephen's thoughts make many unrealistic associations and at the end they lead back to himself, not the world around him. Later on, they will try to connect on intellectual level in order to create a bond.

As I have mentioned before, *Ulysses* functions as a modern epic not just because it was inspired by one, but because it bears the characteristics of an epic, as well. In every story where there is a hero, there is an enemy as well. Leopold Bloom is the hero of *Ulysses*, and we can even say that Stephen is a hero as well. There is enemy as such in a shape of a

character but rather within a character. Leopold is his own enemy in a sense that he allows himself through his actions to look like a coward in the eyes of the others. His enemy comes in a shape of “existential middle-aged crisis” where here goes on a journey where he learns to stand up for himself even when he finds himself “surrounded by crowd that ignores him or speaks against him” (MacCabre 33). At the end, however, he does not defeat his biggest enemy and that is his wife’s lover and his wife in general, but through the day he fought many battles just like Odysseus in order to come home at peace with himself. At the beginning of his day, Leopold did everything to avoid meeting Molly’s lover but by the end of his day, Leopold stopped hiding himself. As far as Stephen is concerned, his biggest enemy is his past that prevents him to become successful a poet.

Moving further along we come to the episode the Lotus eaters, which is a reference to the land of Lotus Eaters from an episode in of *Odyssey*. At the beginning of his voyage from Troy Odysseus and his men got stranded on the land of Lotus Eaters where everyone who ate the magic lotus wanted to stay on the island forever. That island was exotic and exciting, but also offered delusional state of mind. For Leopold, exotic and exciting place is the Far East because his wife Molly has spent her childhood in Gibraltar. His thoughts about Far East are full of his own imaginary ideas about her childhood because it is something unknown to him. Lotus is a flower which gave Ulysses’ crew escape from reality, while Leopold uses another flower to escape his. He uses an alias under name Henry Flower to write love letters to a woman he never met in person, which is his way of escaping the reality of his marriage and the actual affair that his wife is having. Although his affair is strictly only on paper, that is enough to give his imagination the escape he needs from his usual life. In the chapter, Leopold’s stream of consciousness consists of his temporal and spatial thinking.

Leopold Bloom is at a friend’s funeral where he is trying to stay focused on what is going on but is unable to stop his mind from wandering around. Considering that the main

event around which the action in this chapter is centered is funeral, it is evident that the major theme is death. Therefore, in the title there is Hades who is the god of underworld and death. In Greek literature, every visit to the underworld by a living person is a heroic act. This parallels an episode in which Ulysses visits Hades. Furthermore, Dublin parallels the underground world of the dead when the funeral crosses four rivers just like there are four rivers that divide underground. Dignam, on whose funeral Leopold is, died due to lack of self-control during drinking. This is an allusion to a crew member who Ulysses meets in underworld, who also died due to lack of self-control. Another figure from Greek mythology that we can find is Sisyphus in the character of Cunningham who, despite his efforts, is not progressing in life. In this episode, Leopold finds himself confronted with his “enemy” and that is isolation within a group. There are many characters in this chapter that also attend the funeral, but Leopold is the only one that acts properly and with respect. Although it is nothing big or special it is a heroic act in the life of this ordinary man. Someone who is close to death in that way has to be not only physically but also mentally strong.

The style of writing in *Ulysses* is very flexible, especially in the Aeolus chapter, where there are newspapers headlines inserted throughout the chapter without the connection with the scene. The headlines appear out of nowhere and without any control just like Aeolus' winds. The title of this chapter, Aeolus, belongs to the Greek god of the winds. In *Odyssey*, he gives a bag of winds to Odysseus, but those winds were released by his crew without any control over them. The headlines are being blown into the chapter just like those winds, without control, direction and meaning. Speech just floats in the chapter without any direction and many stories are left open-ended as we are moving from one conversation to another without clear boundary where one ends and the other begins. While Leopold is searching the picture of crossed keys for Keyes ad, he himself wanders around keyless because he forgot his keys at home and now he can not go home, but at the same does not want to go home due to

Molly's affair. Furthermore, characters in this episode do not succeed to fulfill their tasks or to realize their intentions - Leopold does not get the ad to the paper, Stephen fails to meet with Mulligan and O'Molloy fails to get money. It appears as all of them got blown away of their course by winds from Odysseus bag.

In the matching episode in *Odyssey*, the hero comes upon cannibals while in Joyce there are scenes of eating and images of digestion. Throughout the chapter men prey upon each other's flaws and, as the chapter develops, Leopold's flaws gradually became less his and more common to others as well. He turns into an image of an ordinary everyman figure. Considering that the essence of *Ulysses* is in its details, we are here presented with details that are allusions to some scenes from *Odyssey*. For example, Joyce gave us "...perfume of embraces all him assailed. With hungered flesh obscurely, he mutely craved to adore" (Joyce 151). These are the words that he used to express the effect that women's petticoats from a shop window left on hungry Leopold. However, this is the allusion to a scene in which cannibals king's daughter seduces Odysseus.

The correlation between the title of the Scylla and Charybdis episode and the metaphors for Scylla and Charybdis are visible from the beginning of this episode. The connection between *Odysseus* and *Ulysses* is made through parallel between these names that represent danger for Ulysses. In the original story, Scylla is a six-headed monster that lives on a sharp mountain peak, and Charybdis is a giant whirlpool. If he fails to keep the curs straight ahead he will lose either his ship or a few men of his crew. Either way he will lose something. In the novel, Stephen tries to prove his intellectual abilities. He puts himself in a similar situation where he can lose something no matter what he chooses. For him, it is also difficult to navigate through his mind because he is in contradiction with himself as well. When he talks about his theory of Shakespeare, he does not believe in his own arguments. During Stephen's literary argument at the beginning of the chapter he also explains how on one hand

Aristotle grounds art in material reality which is comparable to the hard rock of Scylla. While on the other hand Plato pushes for art as a revelation of the ideal of formless spiritual essence is more like the whirlpool. This demonstrates how Joyce draws not only on mythology but on Greek philosophy as well. According to Blamire, during his own adventure, “Stephen is confronted with six-headed monster Scylla in a form of five people that he encounters and debates with” (45). The sixth person is Stephen himself in his self-doubt about his own theory concerning Hamlet or any other of his theories. As if wanting to show us the rest of Dublin and its citizens, Joyce inserted a chapter in which he put random minor characters and their doings simultaneously in the same period of time. Conveniently, he named it Wandering Rocks. Although in original Homer’s epic, Ulysses successfully avoids wandering rocks, here we have a bunch of people wandering around without a final destination, full of questions and doubt concerning their homeland. These “wandering rocks” are actually traps for reader. There are many occurrences of one-line or two-line descriptions of an action that is happening elsewhere or one-line stream of consciousness that interrupts the action.

It is well known that Sirens singing is so beautiful that it drives men mad; therefore, Odysseus is tied on his ship so that he can reach the island safely although he hears them sing. Joyce gives us two barmaids and although all the men are allured by their charms, the real risk is not falling under their spell, but rather falling into sentimentality. The chapter is written using sounds that imitate music, moreover, the sounds from the first part resemble symphony. Music is introduced in the story by the humming of a barmaid, Miss Douce, and becomes formal and public when the drinkers start to play the piano and everyone in the bar joins in. Gradually, it becomes patriotic and the theme of nationalism is made explicit setting the mood of sentimentality. However, Odysseus did not go through the feeling of sentimentality. Although Odysseus was tied in order to keep himself safe from reacting to sirens’ song, while he was still moved by it, he went through sentimentality. On the other hand, we have Leopold

who reached sentimentality through the feelings of self-pity. Unlike others in the bar, he does not engage in the performance, but experiences emotions for himself.

In this chapter, female characters were given more importance than in the other chapters: “Through the centering and an analysis of the female characters, Penelope and Molly, even though they play peripheral roles, the changing position of woman in patriarchal societies, is brought to the fore “(Shoily 63). The main female protagonist plays an important role in both *Odyssey* and *Ulysses*. On the one hand, there is Penelope in *Odyssey*, the faithful wife who constantly needs to be taken care of, has almost no voice and is subjected to the male heroic characters. On the other hand there is Molly in *Ulysses*, who is an unfaithful and independent wife and there is an entire chapter dedicated to her monologue. Molly’s thoughts are centered around her everyday occurrences, without human interactions in them. The most occurring object in her thoughts is Leopold to whom she is faithful in her mind. Furthermore, Penelope was voiceless because she was overpowered in a patriarchal society where only the voice of Odysseus was the dominant one. However, we have to keep in mind that in Hellenic times the position of a woman was that of a dependable mother. Her counterpart Molly represents the psyche of a modern woman and is given an entire episode which represents her inner thoughts. Moreover, inside Leopold thoughts Molly gradually goes through the transition during which she becomes an idea that pervades the narrative. Molly’s growing affection towards Boylan’s courtship humiliates Leopold and makes him even more submissive to her. Beside Molly, there is another female character named Gerty that makes brief appearance. According to Gifford, in the episode *Nausicaa* “she is objectified and shown as an ideal to which we need to aspire in the matters of love and femininity” (68). However, at the same time she does the same to Leopold. She imagines him as a heroic man, superior to others, creating a perfect romance between them in the form of abstract love. On the other hand, for



Leopold there is no perfect romance between them, just selfish motives based upon physical attraction.

The story about one-eyed Cyclopes belongs to the most famous stories from *Odyssey*, and in this chapter there are many allusions to it. In *Ulysses*, being one-eyed is a metaphor for being confined to a narrow point of view. The strongest allusion is a scene where the narrow-minded citizen throws a box of biscuits on Bloom imitating the scene where one of the Cyclopes throws a boulder on Odysseus. Leopold, just like Odysseus, demonstrates his superiority and escapes from the confrontation unharmed. This is the first chapter there is an unknown narrator without insight into Leopold's inner thoughts, which means that everything that is told to us must be true as it is told from the objective point of view. According to Grifford, "there is another motif in this episode and that is Christian prophet" (86). Leopold is shown as Elijah-figure during his argument with the citizen and later when he successfully leaves the bar without engaging in further discussions or fights. This episode is important for Leopold, because he finally stood up to someone, gained masculinity and stopped being just a face in the crowd, a nobody. The victory of the horse Throwaway symbolizes Leopold's victory because no one thought that he is capable of this. He has overcome the greatest challenge and defeated his enemy. For the first time, he was the winner. Although, this might seem small victory, it is a heroic one in a life of this ordinary man.

In this episode, Leopold makes misjudgment regarding the beauty of a girl named Gerty he sees on the beach, creating a divine beauty out of her character. Here is Leopold, as modern Ulysses, who got hit by her ball, just like the original Ulysses who was washed ashore on the land of Phaeacians got hit by a ball that Princess Nausicaa lost during a game (Blamire 40). Gerty as modern Nausicaa sees Leopold, modern Ulysses, as a dark exciting stranger whom she found on the beach. Both of them, Leopold and Ulysses, were shipwrecked on the beach in need of a spiritual and physical comfort. This is shown through Gerty's attempt to

save him from his pain and sympathetic desire to offer him love. The return to the rocks on the beach side is a parallel between Stephen and Leopold indicating that both are lonely characters. This Ulysses' adventure takes part after the Trojan War which was caused by the beauty of Helena. Joyce takes Homeric goddesses and heroes and gives them all human dimensions, making a satire out of human's selfish reasons for beginning a war such as beauty. Moreover, Gerty contradicts princess Nausicaa as she is not only a virgin, but a spinster as well. Leopold finds her attractive because she is a stranger to him. Although Molly is represented as modern Penelope, there are more similarities between Gerty and Penelope. For example, they both show capacity and desire for love.

As before mentioned, the relationship between father and son that was created between Leopold and Stephen has its beginning in Oxen of the Sun episode, which main theme is life versus death. After going through reoccurring memory of Stephen's dead mother, Leopold's dead child and Dignam's funeral which took us to the underground world of the marked an end the decay and infertility by giving us a birth of a son. Deaths and births that are happening inside a small crowded hospital resemble to a scene with cattle in a barn. Despite the fact that no one slaughtered any cattle, like Ulysses' crew did, Joyce gave us many hidden puns on that theme. This episode puts an emphasis on the lack of paternal relationship, even though Leopold and Stephen made a connection. Leopold steps in his role as a father figure when he decides that he has to save Stephen from the influence of the others, especially from Mulligan. After his voyage as a modern Telemachus in search of identity and his figure as modern Hamlet who is obsessed with questions of paternity, Stephen returns to the image of his dead mother. At the same time, Leopold has returned to the memory of his dead son.

Circe is an enchantress who is most famous for to her beauty and powerful spells. When, together with his crew, Ulysses comes to her they have to fight those spells. Circe turns many of them into swine and leads them to her other male victims, while Ulysses and

the rest of the crew have to overcome her charms in order to avoid the same destiny. Modern replica of Circe is Bella Cohen, who runs a brothel. Unlike the original Ulysses, Leopold falls into her spells the moment he steps inside of the brothel. He did not try to overcome her spells, but he rather fell into hallucinations. Stephen becomes hypnotized as well, but with the ghost of his mother and her eternal wish for him to pray over her. In one of the longest episodes of *Ulysses*, where everything appears as if in a dream, we are confronted with many puns and Biblical allusions, dead members of their family, characters from previous chapters as well as Shakespeare and music. Stephen again appears as modern Hamlet when his mother's ghost drives him into madness. He finally wins his independence when, smashing his mother's image, he smashes the chandelier.

When Ulysses arrived in Ithaca, he had help from Eumaeus who provided him with shelter. Leopold helps Stephen and provides him with shelter in a form of a coffee house. Leopold carries the image of modern Ulysses as an ordinary man who turned into a hero; however in this episode we have a minor character that carries more resemblances to Ulysses than our hero. Sailor Murphy is an excellent example of Ulysses prototype. He traveled the world, has been into many adventures and after wandering around the globe has returned home to his wife. However, both Leopold and Stephen have wandered around all day: "Neither one of them is going home the same as they had left that morning" (Gilbert 56). They learned from their adventures things that changed them from within. This voyage was a moral one for Leopold where he got the courage to stand up for himself and where he found someone to be father to. Stephen needed this voyage to find someone who is going to guide him, namely Leopold. He also needed to find his own identity through destroying the chain that tied him to the memory of his dead mother, leading him into liberty.

The entire episode carries the motif of disguise and is full of imposters. According to Hodgart, "the true identities of characters such as coffee shop's owner and sailor are

questionable”, as well as Leopold’s role of a father-figure (37). He is not the idealized father-figure that Stephen aspires to have. Their intellectual connection is just an illusion created by Leopold because he believes that they made a connection via discussion over politics when in reality they have opposite views on the matter. When the real Odysseus comes to his son and reveals himself as his father, Telemachus’ idealized vision of a father becomes reality: “. . . each contemplating the other in both mirrors of the reciprocal flesh of theirhisnothis fellowfaces” (Joyce 89). In this moment they had an ideal father-son relationship that begun and ended in that same moment. Their wordless interaction gave them an instant comfort. Leopold fulfilled his need for a son, while at the same time he did not succeed to fulfill Stephen’s desire for a father. It is interesting to note that although Stephen is being haunted by the image of his dead mother, it is the father figure that he seeks and not a mother figure: “A father, Stephen said, battling against hopelessness, is a necessary evil “(Joyce 188). This might be connected with the feeling that, in his mother’s eyes, he is a disappointment as a son. This entire time there is Leopold’s desire to have a son, but there is no Molly’s desire to be a mother to another child besides their daughter. She could not have worked out as a mother-figure because, from the beginning, she is represented as an independent woman who enjoys the fact that she does not have a child to take care of. She does not show concern about taking care of her husband or desire to engage in such actions. However, there is a brief moment at the end of the novel where she considers the idea of making him breakfast.

In the end; Leopold proved to be a hero in his own way. He might be an ordinary man, but his thoughts and action during the day made him a hero. He tries to see good in everyone and is ready to forgive any kind of insult. He offers guidance to Stephen because he sees mutual benefactions that might be born from their future intellectual conversations. His act of heroism can be found in his attempts to make the world a better place. Upon his arrival home, Ulysses and his son Telemachus killed all the young men that were courting Penelope.

Although he considers divorce and thinks about consequences, when he arrives home he decides to forgive his unfaithful wife in order to keep the comfort of married life. Stephen is still doomed to wander, but now he can do it freely without the ghost of his dead mother following him.

In *Ulysses* we need to go through several perceptions of a character in order to make a judgment. Without knowing that *Ulysses* is based on *Odyssey* we would never see Leopold as a hero of a modern epic or Molly as a modern Penelope. Leopold is not courageous, does not have outstanding achievements or noble qualities. His comparison to Odysseus is purely a metaphorical one. However, we have to consider that what makes someone a hero does not have to be something huge. Heroism can be found even in small everyday things. Odysseus had his big adventure while trying to go back home, but at the same time he was more procrastinating than actually working on a way to go home. Leopold was procrastinating as well by delaying his return home because he did not want to catch his wife with her lover. Despite being an antihero he is the only one that shows compassion. He shows compassion to everyone he sees during the day, from cat and bird to Mrs. Purefoy's difficult labor. Through these moments where he shows that he is capable for compassion even when others are not, he carries the main most important theme of the novel and that is love: "Love loves to love love" (Joyce327).

## 7. Conclusion

James Joyce took chaotic a contemporary world and, using Homeric epic, gave order to its meaningless routine. The lives of characters are guided by mythical framework which gives meaning to their everyday doings and turns them into modern day heroes. However, these modern day heroes were given all too human dimensions which, in result, turned *Ulysses* into a mock-heroic epic. Joyce did not make a character based upon an inspirational

picture that goes beyond reality. Instead, he wrote about an ordinary man without epic or poetic characteristics, represented as a fool shown to us in his everyday trivialities. His big adventure is, in fact, just another day in life. His challenges and struggles are the same ones that we face every day and can happen to any of us. His difficulties are Joyce's difficulties as well, which he expressed by using complex style of writing. This, in result, causes difficulties for the reader making him or her go on an adventure of reading *Ulysses*. When Joyce wrote an epic about the ordinary man, Leopold Bloom, and his adventures that only happen in his mind, where he escapes from tough reality into securities of imagination, he gave us a world where we all can escape from reality. He created a world so complex that we can get lost in it and find our own adventures. *Ulysses* is full of allusions and reoccurring details that, no matter how small they may seem, have a bigger meaning within the whole story. Mythical creatures and monsters hide themselves in a shape of motifs that we as readers have to recognize, as well as in the allusions that tell a story of their own. *Ulysses* is not just an ordinary world turned into an extraordinary one, but it is also an epic within an epic.

Furthermore, Joyce uses myth to deal with everyday themes such as religion, history and family relationships. The latter is a recurring theme in the novel, whether it is a ghost of a dead mother that demands obedience from the lost son or two different persons that are trying to fulfill each other's desires in the father-son relationship. Moreover, we have a detailed insight in characters' stream of consciousness that helps us understand them better and see how their imagination gives contribution to their everyday activities rather than just justifying their actions. Although we are dealing with complex language and far-fetched imagination, if we look underneath all the allusions, we will find some of the most common and simplest human situations. This proves that, no matter how insignificant something may appear at first, it can turn to be of a bigger importance if we just try to see extraordinary even in everyday trivialities.

*Ulysses* turns ordinary into extraordinary, making a hero out of an ordinary common man. Because of this and many other examples, the book had a major influence on the development of 20th century modernist literature. The essence of *Ulysses* is in its details, as Joyce makes us delve into the character's psyche and inner lives and witness the intertwining of reality and fantasy.

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## 8. SYMBOLS IN JAMES JOYCE'S *ULYSSES*

### Summary

In this final paper I analyse the use of symbols in James Joyce's best known novel *Ulysses* which draws heavily on Homers' epic *Odyssey*. This paper attempts to demonstrate *Ulysses* not as a modern version of *Odyssey*, but rather as a completely new narrative. Although, *Ulysses* derives its motifs and the basic storyline from Homeric epic, it is a completely different novel and an epic on its own. This paper also tries to show that underneath all the symbols and complex language, the plot itself is rather a simple one. Using a stream of consciousness technique and multiple points of view, Joyce presents us with an ordinary day in life of an ordinary man, his protagonist who goes around Dublin doing his errands. For him, this is just another day in life but Joyce represents it as something spectacular.

Key words: *Ulysses*, *Odyssey*, myths, symbols, modern epic

## 9. SIMBOLI U ULIKSU JAMESA JOYCA

### Sažetak

U ovom završnom radu analiziram upotrebu simbola unutar Jamesa Joyceovog najpoznatijeg djela *Uliks* koje se temelji na Homerovom epu *Odiseja*. Ovaj rad pokušava prikazati Uliksa ne kao modernu varijantu Odiseje, već kao samostalni epski roman. Premda se motivi i simboli iz Uliksa, kao i sama podloga priče, baziraju na Odiseji Uliks je sasvim novi mitološki roman. Također, ovaj rad pokušava pokazati kako se ispod svih simbola i kompleksnog jezika i gramatike, nalazi jedna sasvim jednostavna priča. Koristeći tehniku

struje svijesti, Joyce nam predstavlja običan danu unutar života glavnog lika koji se šeta Dublinom obavljajući svoje dnevne zadatke. Za njega je to samo jedan običan dan u životu, ali Joyce nam to prikazuje kao nešto spektakularno.

Ključne riječi: *Uliks*, *Odiseja*, mit, simboli, moderni ep