

## On the modernist elements of 'Ithaca' chapter in Joyce's *Ulysses*: Engaging students in class discussion

**Pyeam Abbasi**

(Assistant Professor, University of Isfahan, Islamic Republic of Iran)

Pyeam77@yahoo.co.uk

**Roohollah Datli Beigi**

(MA, University of Isfahan, Islamic Republic of Iran)

rohollah85datlibeigi@yahoo.com

(Received: 25.06.2011, Accepted: 15.02.2012)

### Abstract

James Joyce's *Ulysses* is one of the hall-marks of modernism in the realm of the novel. In this novel, Joyce breaks away from old patterns, employs new techniques, and presents the modern state of man as well as his soul-lacking indeterminate communication with others. Freud's theories on the unique and private quality of man's mode of consciousness and the meddling of the past with present, stressed the twentieth-century man's ill-condition and his position among his fellow beings. Joyce portrays the modern man in his favorite chapter, 'Ithaca,' which has certain features that make the narrative structure in complete step with Joyce's themes regarding the modern man. This paper is an attempt to show how the human race is perceived by Joyce, revealing how the employed elements depict a modern picture of the modern man. This chapter contains many questions and answers that can be discussed in class and students can be engaged in novel-based dialogues and class discussion as an EFL practice.

**Keywords:** Joyce; Ithaca; modernism; consciousness; narrative structure; EFL practice.

### Introduction

Dealing with James Joyce and his works does not seem to be an easy task though the bulk of books and essays on him is striking. James Joyce as a leading exponent of modernism stands at a great distance from

his 19<sup>th</sup> century predecessors by the very elements and techniques employed in his writings. It is an established fact that modernism in the realm of the novel was marked by Joyce's *Ulysses*, and his use of the stream-of-consciousness technique. The need for expressing the truth as perceived by

modernist writers and the fact that the long-held beliefs had no longer any place in their writings, made the writers employ new techniques in expressing new things they had to utter about man, his condition, and his communication with others. For Joyce, who breaks away from old patterns in a way not to be predictable to the reader, the ordinary conventional language cannot be a proper means of representing the inner thoughts, feelings, and experiences of his characters though by reading *Ulysses* one is likely to hear everyday talks, see people and imagine where they are. In Joyce too much attention is paid to the details, and the naturalistic writer's devotion to their description is obvious while the feeling of alienation does not leave the characters alone and changes them into 'keyless' wanderers who feel the need for spiritual communication yet find no means of achieving it. And Joyce, employing new techniques in a dramatic way, depicts the matter of soul-lacking communication among the characters.

As a matter of fact, the possibility of determinate communication is questioned and paradoxically through this indeterminacy one better grasps the status of modern man and his relationship with others. This seems to be Joyce's main reason for presenting the words in the form of question and answer in order to better explore the quality of modern man's relationship with other fellows between whom the distance is long and the chance for satisfying the need too slim.

Freud's theories on man's consciousness and the meddling of the past with the present stress the twentieth-century man's ill-condition and his position among his fellow

beings. Novelists such as Marcel Proust have confirmed the idea by getting help from the stream-of-consciousness technique in order to penetrate into the characters' minds and claim to have discovered all about a character and his past. What is implied is that every human being is known to be imprisoned by a unique consciousness not understood by others. Accordingly the possibility of communication among the members of a society who are imprisoned by private modes of consciousness, was questioned. In order to survive, man was compelled to wear a mask and behave in a way that accepted by the society and hide or repress the reality of the consciousness in which writers were very interested.

The (anti)hero of the twentieth-century novel then finds it difficult to hobnob with other members of the society he lives with and if vestiges of this are found they are awkward, unnatural, insufficient and conventional ways of getting closer to others, and paradoxically the more attempt is put to it, the wider the existing gap may become. In order to show the incommunicability, new methods are employed by Joyce who uses a relaxed tone, an ambiguous mode in his novel, and elaborately plays with the language to better show the awkward relationship between Stephen and his friends; Stephen and Bloom; Bloom and Molly.

### Discussion

*Ulysses*, perhaps the most complicated and challenging masterpiece of James Joyce, is one of the, if not the, greatest novels of the modern era. With all the peculiarities it has, *Ulysses* has reasons for being so. As a piece of literature representing modernism, it

enjoys certain features not practiced before. It grants its readers no definite conclusions and the modern reader feels as if s/he is not sure about anything s/he confronts in the novel while receiving startling insights and believing that anything may be possible.

The way 'Ithaca,' Joyce's favorite, is presented is very challenging to the modern reader. The dramatic structure of this chapter allows it to contain a series of interrogatories or "catechism" whose form resembles an act of drama—the real art in Joyce's opinion—with a dialogue between Bloom and Stephen. The form is as significant as what goes on between them and the poor quality of their interchanges is directly related to the adopted question-and-answer method that reduces the speed of the narrative. Joyce, appalled by the old conventions, did not regard social conventions as important and stable sources of morality. Through Joyce the English novel matured as a system of imaginary and unreal events "against a clearly realized social background" (Daichess, 1962, p.85). Joyce, as a modernist writer, enjoyed making everything new the most obvious of which is seen in the pattern of 'Ithaca' chapter. By breaking of the rhetorical orthodoxy of the novel, Joyce astonishes his reader who is very likely to pause and ponder over the quality of Bloom's and Stephen's pattern of conversation.

Without violating our sense of reality, Joyce moves away from the 19<sup>th</sup> century novel tradition, and presents the events and thoughts in a way that we receive all the information from the objective authorial voice who God-like sits in Bloom's and Stephen's minds providing us with the minute details of their thoughts. The objectivity of the narration —thanks to the

307 posed questions and answers—is different from the objective language of realist writers who use the language to reveal an aspect of the world. Joyce does not insist on using hackneyed descriptions of the world and its inhabitants; in his realistic description he keeps his eye on the domain of description and his success is in his putting a subjective method in an objective framework. As an instance, when Stephen's attention is caught by a rope with handkerchiefs on, the narrator goes on to describe it attentively:

*What did Stephen see on raising his gaze to the height of a yard from the fire towards the opposite wall?*

*Under a row of five coiled spring housebells a curvilinear rope, stretched between two holdfasts athwart across the recess beside the chimney pier, from which hung four small sized square handkerchiefs folded unattached .... (Ulysses, p. 673)*

According to Reichert in adopting such an unconventional technique with an anonymous narrator, Joyce was much influenced by Dante who described everything to its detail and in its "uniqueness," and then placed it "within the framework of his premeditated system" (2002, p.57). Joyce's attention to trivial events of daily life makes him compress *Ulysses* to a relatively short span of time—one day—perhaps to remind us of the Aristotelian unity of time. Joyce believed that "everything is significant in human life ... it all depends on how you look at it," and interestingly enough selects a "method of presenting limited tract of time and space as microcosm, as a small scale model" (Daichess, 1962, p. 93) to represent the

whole human life and history, yet reminding the reader that there is no need to abound the work with facts, and from such presentation and space a lot is elicited about the modern man.

Much of the talk between Stephen and Bloom is about the present, but a short time is given to the past that shows how concerned Joyce was with the past as the base on which the present was founded as well as the interference of the past with present as a token of modernism. Based on the many interchanges between the past and the present, characters are known by their pasts, and access to each character's unique mode of consciousness implies the state of the modern man and the quality of his communication with others. This new condition of the modern man implies losing sight of the past shown in the incompleteness and discontinuity of Stephen's and Bloom's thoughts. Bloom and Stephen move from topic to topic discussing everything and nothing. No sequence or cause-and-effect can be traced in what they discuss, and no discussion is continued to the end. The more one talks, the more alienated the other feels, and the more aware he becomes of his consciousness as a zone not shared by others. All the time we are kept aware of the fact that while they are general human beings they are endowed with their idiosyncratic qualities.

Each character's unique mode of consciousness transgressed by the thoughts of the past keeps the person well out of reach of the other character. This is precisely the fact that makes their communication indeterminate; they show no sincerity about what they discuss; therefore, no matter even if they are racially different:

*Did he find four separating forces between his temporary guest and him? Name, age, race, creed. (Ulysses, p. 702)*

*Did either openly allude their racial difference? Neither. (Ulysses, p. 705)*

Moreover, through the interrogatives alternating from philosophical to personal, or scientific to religious Joyce means to show the absurdity of religious and racial hatred as well so that he can refer to the point that nothing can be taken as granted and the modern man is enmeshed with topics he does not sincerely believe in and for which he shows no respect. Bloom and Stephen agree and disagree, shift from topic to topic, and leave many talks incomplete with which the pleasure of reading the episode tends to be intensified; thus the uncertain, trivial, and the unknown find the chance to flourish. Cause and effect is replaced by chance and the reader comes across events with no logical nexus between them just to enjoy reading a new and complex work different from those of the previous century.

An avant-garde writer like Joyce allows "the unconscious of language to rise to the surface" (Selden, 1989, p.78) which is a reference to the potentialities of the language and the bulk of meaning that can be conveyed, implicitly, through the language. Joyce believes in the striking potentiality of the language and tries to play with it in many ways to be a different experience. Joyce relates the functioning of the unconscious of the mind to the unconscious of the language. The language in which no difficult, technical, but weird words are used is compatible with the changes Dublin and its men undergo. The

strange structures and philosophical words used offer a new experience to the reader. The language is open to examination on different levels of criticism: Linguistics, Science, and even Psychology when mental or psychological problems of characters are referred to. Joyce tries to, based on images and scenes, depict the alienation of modern man or the artist and show his state in modern life: the outer and inner chaos and confusion on two scales of macrocosm and microcosm, external and internal.

The characters function as symbolic pictures of all history, all experience and all humanity. Bloom symbolizes the citizen with the sense of futility, and Dedalus symbolizes the artist or the exiled artist whose salvation in cutting himself off from nets of home, country, and catholic religion. Bloom is endowed with heroic qualities with the realization that "the contrasts between the classical world and the modern [...] would inevitably be ironic on the level of fact," however, "on the level of symbol ... Bloom would prove a worthy counterpart to the hero of Homer's epic" (Litz, 1977, p.392). Joyce shows the modern man and his wanderings in a world where the truth is not really known and no means offered for achieving it. Thus, in such a world not much can be done and the time and energy will be wasted on wanderings that are to no avail. Bloom is one of the most well-known characters in the canon of English Literature symbolizing modern man marked with inaction and impotence.

Frequent interchanges between past and present, discontinuity of thoughts, lack of discipline in what characters say, their disturbed mentalities and the chaotic Dublin as the city of modernity are shown in Joyce's

play with words. Modern life with all its intricacies requires a different language and style to present all it has to offer. Bloom is not Hemingway's fisherman who leads a simple life portrayed in a simple style. In Joyce what originates from the depth of one's mind and imagination is at war with every vestige of simplicity. The language of *Ulysses* with its ironic parallels corresponds to the ambiguities and ironies of the modern life. The question-answers and dialogues are not really communication and pass unnoticed to highlight the unsolved psychological and mental problems of the modern man as the (anti)hero of the twentieth-century who is supposed to, ironically, undertake heroic actions (un)like Odysseus.

The odd and incomplete narrative structure of the episode is like the structure of the society as perceived by its characters who no longer believe in long-held beliefs such as religion or the Christianity of Jesus Christ. The central notion of religion is decentered by Bloom when he refers to Christ as a Jew destabilizing what the public believes, or even when he doubts about his Jewish identity:

*What, reduced to their simplest reciprocal form, were Bloom's thoughts about Bloom and Bloom's thoughts about Stephen's thoughts about Bloom's thoughts about Stephen?'*

*He thought that he thought that he was a Jew whereas he knew that he knew that he was not. (Ulysses, p. 702)*

The incomplete, ungrammatical language with the "poetic magic of unfamiliar names" (Litz, 1977, p.394) manifests itself in the

confrontation of Bloom and Molly whose reunion is unconsummated when Bloom drifts to sleep thinking of “Sinbad the Sailor” to “Xinbad the Phthailer” (*Ulysses*, p. 730) just to show their awkward confrontation and distance through the use of such awkward ambiguous words. The disintegrating state of modern man—Bloom and Molly—is best shown in a language with disintegrating words, structures and complexity unique to itself and, ironically enough, Bloom is pictured as being in favor of complex systems and topics such as astronomy demanding sincere discussion.

The language of this episode is scientific as well as theoretical with references to mathematics and astronomy rendering Bloom’s spiritual conundrums to formulas and observations. The language abundant with references to science, mathematics, and stars is structured to show the adversary stand against religion as a stabilized institution and the significance of science in Joyce’s writing who was influenced by Bruno, the Italian theologian. The occurrence of science in Joyce’s writings shows the victory of science over the church. Stephen is resolute in turning down religion, for he finds the rejection sine qua non in order to become an artist. Getting help from science and scientific-technical writings, Joyce had found a way to show either rejection of what was accepted by the public or a new way of presenting truth—the individual perception of truth and value is one of the themes explored in modernism. In order to present the truth and his characters’ philosophical thoughts, Joyce needed a model and that was Bruno from whom he learned that “complicated philosophical thoughts could be expressed in a language full of invention” (Reichert, 2002, p.58) yet

easy to understand and with an easy tone. The arrangement of answers is a reminder of "the self-confident language of Victorian science" (Litz, 1977, p.395) while most of the answers are simply put forward. The language is a reminder of the "naïve 19<sup>th</sup> century faith in science, or a serious application of scientific theories to human psychology" (ibid., 391). Here is an instance:

What proofs did Bloom adduce to prove that his tendency was towards applied, rather than towards pure, science?

*Certain possible inventions of which he had cogitated when reclining in a state of supine repletion to aid digestion, stimulated by his appreciation of the importance of inventions now common but once revolutionary for example, the acronautic parachute, the reflecting telescope, the spiral corkscrew, the safety pin, the mineral water siphon, the canal lock .... (Ulysses, p. 693)*

*Or What did Bloom see on the range? On the right (smaller) hob a blue enameled saucepan: on the left (larger) hob a black iron kettle. (Ulysses, p. 690)*

Inventing a new language meant fusing of forms and the languages of both common and educated people as well as rebellion against typical values. In such a language the eyes of a scientist are adopted and the style is changed—about the subjectivity and diversity of his styles, Joyce in one of his letters refers to the two adjectives “unknown,” and “undiscovered” (qtd. in Butler, 2002, p.261) which are in close relation with his relativist attitude in manifesting reality—and he likens the work to poetry and music. For this last point Joyce

owes a lot to Wagner for putting the words into forms similar to musical pieces not alien to the themes and characters employed.

Therefore, when a character sings one thing, a chord, a melody, a rhythm ... can make the listener aware that, for instance, the character has something else in mind or something is taking shape in his unconscious that he does not yet know about or something or somebody is present in some layer of his self which he has tried to repress. (Reichert, 2002, p. 76)

Joyce's language in 'Ithaca' is pleasing to hear and rhythms and sounds are composed "according to musical rules" (Reichert, 2002, p.76) and critics have gone farther in calling *Ulysses* a poem. The use of myths, arrangement of words, and specifically ironies are the major attributes upon which such a claim is made. 'Ithaca' is a mixture of symbolism and realism, and realities are described and in places changed to myths. As an instance Joyce by referring to water and its universality does change the fact of water to the myth of water:

*What in water did Bloom, waterlover,  
drawer of water, water carrier, returning to  
the range, admire?*

*Its universality: its democratic quality and  
constancy to its nature in seeking its own  
level ... its properties for cleansing,  
quenching thirst and fire, nourishing  
vegetation ... its metamorphoses as vapour,  
mist, cloud, rain, sleet, snow, hail ... .  
(Ulysses, p. 736)*

If Joyce's style is unique it is because of his unique way of expressing truth as well as the amazing unification of music and science

resulting in the feeling of movement whenever the writer wants us to move and speed up reading the text, and slow down where motion is not desired depending on the purpose of the part and the act of hesitation. What Joyce requires of the reader is not to slow down to think too much nor just go through the lines for the sake of enjoyment. Joyce tries to tell his reader that the truth may lie in what seems trivial and there is nothing wrong with laughing at something serious. Accordingly a shift of style or fusing of styles paves the way for expressing different attitudes and postures over one point which validates Joyce's narration. The tension Joyce created between serious and comic, significant and insignificant, fact and symbol, art and religion, made him never offer one viewpoint and he is famous for the sundry viewpoints he offers with regard to different aspects of life. That is why nothing from outside but the language of *Ulysses* itself can help us understand the text.

Being a stylist of the English language, Joyce uses a variety of narrative structures to show realistic attitudes towards human society and in doing so takes advantage of the language as the medley of many languages. Accordingly the new, not-already-exercised style of Joyce with which he feels at ease, is capable of revealing to the reader the styles of a consciousness with which Joyce is much concerned. At the beginning of the movement, a kind of freedom was felt by the writers which served as the license to employment of experimental styles. New concepts or new interpretations of old concepts do need new ways of expression, the result of which is the creation of an artistic piece that "renders the bourgeois world in all its detail and

potentiality, uniting fact and myth in a classical portrayal of Everyman as dispossessed hero" (Litz, 1977, p. 405).

To enjoy and understand the episode, the language must be enjoyed and understood, for modernist language systems, according to Malamud, "communicate to and through a world of alienation, confusion, distortion, acceleration" (1989, p.12) and the art of rendering such a language requires the hands of an artist.

Subverting rules of narration, Joyce abounds his writing with discontinuities of narrative shifts in words, and their combinations. In Joyce's multi-layered structure, words are of crucial importance, for it is by his play upon them that Joyce tells his reader not to be sure about anything. The way mysterious, odd words are put together and Joyce's portmanteau style tell the reader not to take anything for granted:

'Kolod balejwaw pnamali' (*Ulysses*, p. 698)  
'Particoloured' (715)  
'Binbad' (730)

In one part the two words Bloom and Stephen appear as 'Stoom' and 'Blephen' which is "an apparent instance of circumincession, in that father and son exist reciprocally in one another" (Blamires, 1996, p. 234). The play on words and the use of puns and ironies or words with more than one meaning helps Joyce to refer to many points at the same time or allude to one point while discussing another to make it either more serious or comic and humorous so that the reader is kept aware of the echoes and links between words "they drank in [jocoserious] silence [Epp's]

massproduct, the [creature] cocoa" (*Ulysses*, p. 658).

Joyce's technique of stimulating readers into adopting new perspectives is related to the way he sees truth and expresses it. New perspectives were, for Joyce, the violation of whatever taken for granted and publicly believed. As an instance, to Joyce marriage was not that holy institution dear to nineteenth-century writers, which shows that though Molly and Bloom are married much misunderstanding may exist between them. Joyce examines what he sees and is not confined to habits. Therefore, the reader perceives no borders between what is publicly regarded as important and what as minute. Joyce liked to be ambiguous and the multiplicity of meanings besides ironic attitudes and parallels with regard to different works—Homer's *Odysseus* on which the epic and ironic form of *Ulysses* is founded—or heroes—Christ—provided the means for Joyce via which to keep the reader thinking, hesitating, drawing conclusions, violating them or accepting them with a novel viewpoint.

Saving the 'Ithaca' chapter, other parts of *Ulysses* are heavily based on the stream-of-consciousness technique with little use of punctuation and not-clearly-marked voices in order not to let the reader understand where exactly one voice stops to let another start. However, it should be taken into serious consideration that like every piece of literature enjoying its own logic, *Ulysses* and each episode in it is "self-justified, immune from grafting or dividing." Although in many parts "meaning may be suspended," (Attridge, 2002, 2) every scene and image Joyce depicts is projected in the reader's mind. It is perhaps by "the



operation of chance” that Joyce controls the final meaning and “allow[s] meaning to rise out of” the text and shape itself (ibid., p.3). This is exactly the quality that gives humor to the work. The ironic parallels taken from Homer may, at the first glance, seem humorous. However, the new perspective could be a quality of today’s world that trivial incidents are not less insignificant than the heroic adventures of Homer’s world. On the broader sense the quality of the events is questioned by the reader who in some parts comes to doubt their reality. ‘Is this happening in reality or does it come from the character’s unconscious?’ is the question frequently posed by the alert reader. As a matter of fact it is the quality of undecidability that dominates *Ulysses*. Chinitz takes on the act of flickering of stars as to show their not being fixed and states that they are “indifferent to humanity and best understood as observed objects, whether scientific or aesthetic” (1991, p.439).

This confirms that though Joyce presents the detailed description of things and events, he puts no definite and concluding answer to posed questions: Bloom stares at the stars and sees “a mobility of illusory forms immobilized in space, remobilized in air: a past which possibly had ceased to exist as a present” (*Ulysses*, p. 732). From a Joycean view to reach new insights, previous beliefs must be questioned; to become an artist, religion must fade away; ironic parallels and ‘Ithaca’ abounding with Homeric correspondences and contrasts accompanied by ironic references to Bloom’s Jewishness like “exodus,” “Father,” “wilderness of inhabitations,” yet references to Jude-Christian traditions are drawn to indicate Bloom as a hero with the same attributes as

those of Odysseus who is the hero of his own time with quite different attributes. Bloom, the satiric counterpart of Odysseus, is inactive and caught in a place where not much happens. To the alert reader’s surprise the protagonist is not introduced in terms of action and heroism, for Bloom shows no determination, attempt, purposeful activity and decisiveness. Bloom’s passivity, unheroic activities, and weakness are symbolized by the stars that appear not to be moving or changing when he cannot make relations between his thoughts and the environment. Bloom is remote from reality, does not have the key to his house, fails in making true relationships with his wife—supposed to be the closest person to him—and the society, and wanders in his own thoughts and memories. The modes of shift, relativity, and distortion permeate the work and the language with all its ambiguities, ironies, and references.

Levine believes in “the verbal confusion” in the novel that “match[es] the increasing drunkenness of Stephen and his friends” (2002, p.154). After the day is over, Bloom goes to bed with a feeling of satisfaction, and showing no jealousy towards his rival Boylan. If the modern man is after enjoying a moment’s relief and desires peace in the hustle and bustle of everyday life, Joyce asks why should not Bloom be considered as a hero? Bloom as a modern hero is able to sacrifice self-respect for the sake of married stability after all. When a heroic past is juxtaposed with an unheroic present whose protagonist is Bloom the hero of the twentieth-century remaining passive about his wife’s infidelity, this leads to the “[reduction of] the past as well as the present” (Kettle, 1962, p.137) that does not remain unaffected by the past, and turns the

work into “a comic epic in prose” in Fielding’s words to describe *Joseph Andrews*. And it is no surprise that in such a city as Dublin, Molly becomes the only person not suffering the loneliness and frustration others are exposed to. As a matter of fact “to be distinctively modern the poet must be ironic” (Nicholls, 1995, p.5), so that he can portray the intricacies of modernity.

Joyce abounds his text with characters’ recollections of the past and lets us enter their minds to see what they are obsessed with, and keeps us wandering between reality and their minds. Joyce, intentionally, keeps everything on a pending state to show the uncertainty of reality as perceived by modern people. Such narrative structure best serves Joyce’s purpose of undermining the present state of people. While reading, one gets used to “sudden public manifestations of what one took to be a private memory” (Attridge, 2002, p.3) or the apparent happenings as just characters’ impressions of the outer world: confusion in the inner and outer worlds.

### Conclusion

‘Ithaca,’ a picture of the soulless modern man and his incommunicability, contains many interchanges between past and the present providing the means for Joyce to present the disturbed mentalities of twentieth-century inhabitants of chaotic Dublin.

Change is important to Joyce as a trait of modernism for it is the herald to novelty, destruction, construction, and rising against the conventions. This is reminiscent of Ralph Waldo Emerson’s words: “the new continents are built out of the ruins of an old

planet; the new races fed out of the decomposition of the foregoing. New arts destroy the old” (1971, p.180). Joyce’s language is at the service of character revelation to show the “real self” (Reichert, 2002, p.60) not much involved in heroic actions yet, ironically enough, after ameliorating the world and founding either a Utopian settlement—“Flowerville” or “Bloomcottage.” “that it was a Utopia, there being no known method from the known to the unknown” (*Ulysses*, p.715) or thinking of discovering a gold seam: “the independent discovery of a gold seam of inexhaustible ore” (*Ulysses*, p. 731).

The naturalistic depiction of every day characters helps readers understand the significance of the trivial or apparently insignificant and all that abides characters’ consciousnesses. Only such a Joycean language is capable of presenting the conscious and the unconscious; the significant and the insignificant; the obsessed minds of characters exploring many aspects at the same time, possible only through a fusion of forms, and words being associated or mingled with each other. As a matter of fact the language of modernism as a whole is a language that owes more to implied concepts, silence, and exploration of the unknown and not verbs indicating action and adventure which gives the work a dynamic quality. The onus of interpretation falls to the alert reader to see how an aspect of reality is revealed by the writer and which aspect the writer tries to bring into consideration.

In granting the readers no conclusions, *Ulysses* presents a 'keyless' Bloom who tries another way to enter the house. A Bloom with hesitations and not sure whether,

Hamlet-like, to act or not to act, whether “to enter or not to enter” or “to knock or not to knock” (*Ulysses*, p. 448). On the symbolic level Joyce means to show Bloom's indecision not quite different from that of Hamlet in a different state and period of time, or to show that there is a great difference between the protagonists of a classical work and a modern one. Such a seemingly trivial incident like forgetting one's key has a lot to offer: The key symbolizes approaching truth and direct access to what one is looking for. The key can be an important part to one's journey in getting to a destination. The same as the journey in 'Ithaca' and the quest to reach the truth or the unknown or an 'everlasting yea,' Joyce's language is a quest for the reader to grasp the concept of it with all its complexities.

Life is complex and Joyce gets help from irony and whatever figure to represent its complexities and shock the reader to elicit and accept truth from among either minute events, or characters' unique modes of consciousness. Modernism, after all, originated from self-consciousness, was a projection of the artist's self-consciousness, and takes the reader into the minds of characters with private modes of consciousnesses. The language used to describe is so precise in showing the thought-track of characters that Edmund Wilson has called *Ulysses* “the most faithful X-ray ever taken of the ordinary human consciousness” (1977, p. 288): A language capable of indicating structured representations of memories and fantasies. A text abounding with inner thoughts and outer events needs a unique language to represent them simultaneously and take the reader to a different place while making him think of yet another different

subject by the rhetoric shifts made. The catechism form provides the means for exact “intellectual argument just leading to the parody of the characters” (Litz, 1977, p.395), and shows them as twentieth-century every day heroes dispossessed of certain attributes, endowed with modern qualities, in desperate need of a soul, imprisoned by a unique mode of consciousness, and after finding a way of satisfying the need for spiritual communication in a decadent Western civilization. By learning experimental techniques and narrative structures, students can engage in such class activities as practicing dialogues. This promotes students' use of structures in context. Students can be asked to produce specific questions and answers in direct interaction and based on the novel's content regarding the modern man.

## References

- Attridge, D. (2002). *Postmodern Joyce: Chance, Coincidence and the Reader. Joyce Effects.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Blamires, H. (1996). *The Bloomsday Book: A Guide through Joyce's Ulysses.* London: Methuen.
- Butler, C. (2002). Joyce, Modernism, and Post-modernism. In A. Attridge (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chinitz, D. (1991). All the Dishevelled Wandering Stars: Astronomical Symbolism. *20<sup>th</sup> Century Literature.* 37(4), Hofstra University.
- Daiches, D. (1962). *The Present Age.* Vol 5. London: The Cresset Press.
- Emerson, R.W. (1971). *Collected Works,* Vol.1: *Nature, Addresses, and*

- Lectures*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.
- Joyce, J. (1990). *Ulysses*. Foreword by Morris L. Ernst. New York: Vintage Books.
- Kettle, A. (1962). *An Introduction to the English Novel*. Vol.2. London: Hutchinson and Co. LTD.
- Levine, J. (2002). *Ulysses*. In D. Attridge (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Litz A. Walton. (1977). Ithaca. *James Joyce's Ulysses, Critical Essays*. Edited by C. Hart and D. Hayman. University of California Press.
- Malamud, R. (1989). *The Language of Modernism*. Ann Arbor: UMI.
- Nicholls, P. (1995). *Modernism: A Literary Guide*. London: Macmillan Press LTD.
- Reichert, K. (2002). The European Background of Joyce's Writing. In D. Attridge (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Selden, R. (1989). *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Wilson, E. (1970). *The Critical Heritage*, ed. Robert H. Deming, 2 vols. London: Routledge.