



Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi  
The Journal of Social Sciences Institute  
Yıl/Year: 2019 – İlkbahar / Spring Sayı/Issue: 43  
Sayfa / Page: 11-23

ISSN: 1302-6879 VAN/TURKEY

Makale Bilgisi / Article Info - Geliş/Received: 25.02.2019  
Kabul/Accepted: 14.03.2019 - Araştırma Makalesi / Research Article

**THE COMPARISON OF IDE-  
AL HEROES OF FRIEDRICH  
WILHELM NIETZSCHE AND  
JAMES JOYCE**

***FRIEDRICH WILHELM NIETZ-  
SCHE VE JAMES JOYCE'UN  
İDEAL KAHRAMANLARININ  
KARŞILAŞTIRILMASI***

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### **Abstract**

This article aims to make a comparative analysis of ideal hero and heroism suggested by renown Irish author James Joyce and by German thinker Friedrich Nietzsche, one of the most influential philosophers of all times. The similarities and differences in the portrayals of ideal heroes in their works are comparatively analysed in this study. Strictly speaking, the heroes formulated and foregrounded by these writers are rather striking, and what is more they are, exceptional, unique and peculiar to each figure. While Nietzsche attribute a deeper philosophical meaning to the hero figure, Joyce's ideal hero figure is not only unconventional but sophisticated, and blended with a more intense literary style. In fact, the hero figure of both authors is in line with anti-hero typology, or the modern hero type, in other words. They manage to get the sympathies of the readers who feel quite close to such characters in any given environment. Both writers' heroes have an ideal quest in their approach, and the present social values are criticized.

**Keywords:** Friedrich Nietzsche, James Joyce, modernism, ideal hero, anti-hero.

## Öz

Bu makale, ünlü İrlandalı yazar James Joyce ve tüm zamanların en etkili filozoflarından olan Alman Friedrich Nietzsche tarafından ileri sürülen ideal kahraman ve kahramanlığın karşılaştırmalı bir analizini yapmayı amaçlamaktadır. Söz konusu yazarların çalışmalarında ideal kahraman tasvirlerindeki benzerlikler ve farklılıklar bu çalışmada karşılaştırmalı olarak incelenmiştir. Çalışmamızda bu yazarlar tarafından tanımlanan ve ön plana çıkarılan kahramanların oldukça dikkat çekici, sıra dışı ve farklı oldukları; ayrıca adı geçen yazarlara özgü oldukları sonucuna varılmıştır. Nietzsche kahraman figürüne daha derin bir felsefi anlam yüklerken Joyce'un ideal kahraman figürü sadece gelenek dışı olmakla kalmaz, aynı zamanda yazar yoğun bir edebi üslupla harmanlayarak karakterini karmaşık bir kişiliğe büründürür. Aslında, her iki yazarın kahraman figürleri, anti-kahraman tipoloji veya diğer bir deyişle modern kahraman türü ile aynı çizgidedir. Nietzsche ve Joyce birbirlerinden tamamen farklı ortamlarda resmedilen bu tür karakterlere karşı okurların sempatilerini kazanmayı başarırlar çünkü okurlar kendilerini bu tür karakterlere yakın hissederler. Her iki yazarın kahramanları ideal bir arayışa girerek mevcut sosyal değerleri kıyasıya eleştirirler.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Friedrich Nietzsche, James Joyce, modernizm, ideal kahraman, anti-kahraman.

## Introduction

The purpose of this study is to make a comparative analysis of the famous Irish author James Joyce's ideal hero with that of Friedrich Nietzsche, one of the most important names in the history of philosophy as well as to study the term "hero" and its historical development, to show heroism in their philosophy, and the influence of Nietzsche on Joyce giving examples. This work seeks to reveal the influences of Nietzsche in James Joyce's novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916). Similarities and differences in the portrayals of modern intellectuals in the works in question are comparatively analysed in this study. The experiences of modern intellectuals such as 'nothingness', search for the meaning of existence and disconnectedness from society are to be dealt with as one of the most significant subject matters in modernist literature. The feeling of loneliness and alienation among the modern individuals as a result of socio cultural depressions in the first half of the 20th century is best reflected in the works of James Joyce. Coming up with his own concept of intellectual by adjusting an intellectual into his own cultural, social and national environments, Joyce seems to use philosophy in a unique way. Using the Nietzschean philosophy, Joyce becomes one of the few writers who turn the world into a novel. In this respect, Nietzsche has a great influence over Joyce and his followers. Therefore, this study is also important in terms of showing the effects of Nietzsche.

One of the main issues in mythology is the desire of mankind to

create an image, figure or base point through mythology. The desire to believe in a supreme and superior being, to connect to it, to see it as the main source of power is the fundamental element that enables the mythological creation of the hero figure. This hero figure can be realized not only as human beings, but also as God figures, animal figures, or fictitious living figures. The creation of mythological heroes can be regarded as a result of the needs of man and society. At the beginning of these needs, there is a sense of faith, trust, devotion and belonging. In the face of the inability to explain the nature events, mythological God heroes are created and nature events are explained through these gods. When explaining the existence or development of a nation or state, "national heroes" with supernatural powers are created to motivate people connected to that nation. In the context of faith and religion, various beliefs and heroes with superior qualities are created for the fulfilment of human needs or for the use of faith as a tool for another aim.

Heroism has been one of the main subjects of literature throughout history. The heroic phenomenon can be considered in the mystical dimension, and modern episodes of heroism or anti-heroism are also developments in this field. It is important to summarize modern myth studies in order to understand in-depth the concept hero. The quest to understand what myth is extends back to the 6th century BC. Those who do research in this area have to devote a considerable part of their time to ancient Greek myths. Directly or indirectly, many mythologies are associated with the Ancient Greek era (Kirk, 1975: 1). The relationship between heroism and myth is shaped by the fact that the human being is seen as a divine symbol. The mythological conception, which is shaped on the same basis in different geographical regions, is described as the shadow of the god in the world with its supernatural qualities (Leeming, 1998: 7). Leeming describes the hero's development as well as adventure in an eight-step process (7-8):

1. Miraculous conception and birth of the hero
2. Initiation of the hero-child and first trial
3. Withdrawal from society for seclusion and preparation
4. Second trial and be on a quest
5. Demise or death
6. Descend into the under world
7. Resurgence and reborn
8. Ascension-apotheosis-atonement or redemption.

## Who is Hero?

The concept heroism can be viewed from different points such as anthropology, culture, philosophy, sociology, and mythology or religion. Making the definition of the term hero, Oxford dictionary addresses the richness in disciplines:

A person who is admired for their courage, outstanding achievements, or noble qualities: The chief male character in a book, play, or film, who is typically identified with good qualities, and with whom the reader is expected to sympathize; (in mythology and folklore) a person of superhuman qualities and often semi-divine origin, in particular one whose exploits were the subject of ancient Greek myths; the best or most important thing in a set or group. (oxforddictionaries.com)

In ancient Greek philosophy, heroic figure was used as a common cliché in art, politics, literature, philosophy and other fields. Plato's hero, for example, is a person who is deeply suffering, rather than being defined as a mythological character with high powers and qualities. The myths and stories about the Greek Gods in the cultural codes of society were considered by the intellectual as an important element in the artistic and intellectual fields. In Medieval Europe intellectuals considered the concept of hero in the axis of politics, society and religion. During this period the figures of Christianity and kingdom or feudal system were dominant in the definition of heroism (Davis, 2009: 7-8). In this period, the then opposition groups made their own definition of a pioneer who did not abide by the rules. In the modern era, there is a wide variety of definitions for the concept. These definitions can be in the form of a modern hero or anti-hero as well as a traditional hero figure. Joseph Campbell is one of the most important scholars who define the term thoroughly. Campbell has defined it in the context of certain features (1991: 35-48):

The typical hero can sacrifice his own life for a higher value, exhibiting actions that require courage in terms of physical or spiritual. He is the person who feels the shortcomings and problems in the society. He is thrown into many adventures to solve a problem or find answers to questions in his mind. The hero usually enters the adventure leaving the safe environment he is in. The hero will face many tests and troubles in this process. He has to finish and achieve something. When making definitions of the hero concept, it is also necessary to state the hero typologies. While classifying the hero concept, there are two main classifications as traditional heroes and modern heroes. Traditional heroes are mythological and legendary heroes mentioned above. Modern heroes are classified by modern

fictional approaches. In this context, Christopher Vogler classified the hero typologies in seven main headings (1998: 54-62):

1. **Eager, Vigorous or Enthusiastic Heroes:** This hero type has an adventurous, decisive, carefree, indubious, always bold and self-motivated character.
2. **Reluctant Heroes:** This hero type is sceptical, hesitant, passive, motivated by external forces, but after a point he/she becomes committed to the adventure.
3. **Anti-Heroes:** This hero type has a specialized character. These heroes are illegal and rebellious in terms of society. They have a certain attractiveness in terms of audience or target audience. They do not believe that corruption in society and problems can be solved with certain norms.
4. **Tragic-Heroes:** These heroes have obvious flaws. They cannot overcome their mephisto. They have been betrayed and are severely damaged. However, despite all these problems and flaws, they are finally justified.
5. **Oriented Group Heroes:** These heroes are part of the society in the first place. The journey of heroism leads them away from home to unknown lands. They go into social isolation and head to the adventure alone.
6. **Lonely Heroes:** This hero typology is isolated from society. They are alone in the first phase of the hero, but in the process they enter the group. The adventure begins within the group. Ultimately they again turn to social isolation.
7. **Catalyst-Heroes:** This hero type has the central figure role that preserves its own character. Their main purpose or objective is to influence others and change them.

### **Nietzsche's Life and Intellectual Development**

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, German philosopher, poet, musician and philologist, is considered one of the most influential contemporary thinkers of the nineteenth century. Born on October 15, 1844, Röcken, Lützen, Germany, and died on August 25, 1900, Weimar, Germany, the influential philosopher was himself mainly influenced by Arthur Schopenhauer, Immanuel Kant, and Plato. He educated at University of Bonn, Schulpforta, and University of Leipzig. Nietzsche's family was a small tradesmen family, devout and Lutheran. His grandfather and father were priests in a state-controlled church. Nietzsche's father was a loyal servant of the Prus-

sian king, IV. Friedrich Wilhelm. During his childhood, Nietzsche lived in a house full of chaste women in Naumburg (mother, sister, grandmother, and his unmarried, lunatic aunts) and for this reason he gave a special importance to the female figurine in his works. The intense influence of the religious environment would be seen in Nietzsche's educational life and he was called "the little Protestant priest" at the school. When Nietzsche reached the age of nineteen, he began studying theology and classical philology at Bonn University to become a priest. This religious and disciplined control mechanism of Nietzsche's life led to the further development of his rebellious feelings. As a result of this reactionary process that developed within Nietzsche, he began to take a new approach to religious references and the existence of God. As a result of this sudden change in his thoughts, Nietzsche end up with the motto of "God is Dead". After this instantaneous turn in Nietzsche's life, he ended his Theology education. The first of two major turning points in Nietzsche's life is catching syphilis in a brothel when he was 21. This shaped Nietzsche's approach to sexuality and women issues. Having read *The World as Will and Representation* (1819) by Arthur Schopenhauer, the infectious pessimism began dominating Nietzsche's ideas. Nietzsche interpreted life as a melodrama, never addressed his speeches to a particular group, person or a certain society, spoke constantly on his own, and his rhetoric could not be answered by anybody as a comprehensive manner, but left deep traces on the history of 20th century philosophy especially in German philosophical history (Burnham, 2007: 9-12). Nietzsche most important philosophies are reflected in the title of his works: "God is dead", "Superior Human", "Christianity and Antichrist", "Apollonian and Dionysian Forces", "Free Spirits", and "Master and Slave Moralities".

### **Nietzschean Philosophy**

One of the most significant contributions of Nietzschean philosophy to the literature is nihilism, and in this context the system of this philosophical values or approachment fire upon all religious-referenced philosophical ideas. This aggressive philosophical attitude of Nietzsche against traditional values, ethical phenomena, or religious thinking is rooted in the idea of "God is dead" trying to alter or destroy the established order, and instead producing the substitutes as its own system of values. In Nietzsche's famous, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, it is emphasized that the ideal human or superior man must be created in the context of the above-mentioned critical philosophical thoughts. Nietzsche emphasizes the qualities of "Free Spirits" that can reach maturity and integrity, while explaining how these spirits are born. This situation is defined as salvation, or break of chains. Free Spirits is a way for great salvation for Nietzsche. This salvation cre-

ates a tremendous tremor in the minds of those who are condemned, and the young spirit is torn apart and dispersed by this sudden tremor, unable to make sense of this realization (Bamford, 2015). As a result of this sudden jolt, man starts to follow the direction shown by the free spirit and moves in this context, the body and the spirit meet on the axis of a common desire. But Nietzsche seems to have emphasized some points that need attention. This is the process that existed within free spirit and involves very serious struggles or difficulties.

### **Friedrich Nietzsche's *Übermensch*: A Hero of Our Time**

In the 19th century in the West, the first major break in the traditional line of philosophical scenes was realized by F. W. Nietzsche (1844-1900), German philosopher, poet, musician and philologist, and considered one of the most influential contemporary thinkers of the nineteenth century. Nietzsche laid the foundations of philosophy to oppose the cultural and religious belief of the age. The moral vision that emerges from the way he understands superior human understanding and master-slave relation is of the utmost importance. Nietzsche, who is very influential on many subsequent thinkers, is seen as the pioneer of nihilism in philosophy (Sevinç, 2007: iv). Nietzsche has ideas in a more advanced level than the marginal views of his own age in his approach to the subject of "mankind". Nietzsche has developed an extraordinary style, especially in his approach to morality and people. Nietzsche expresses the "purpose and reference point of man". For him, man is deficient, incomplete and open to everything. He can go backwards, he can turn right or left, or he can go upstairs. So the direction of a man should determine its purpose. "Life always defeat itself". There is no better way to keep up with life and also corresponding with life. Man is missing, but he will make up for it himself. Salvation will come to him from himself. All the splendour and beauty of the beings that are supposed to be glorified outside of hitherto will belong to him. Human beings cannot do this by themselves. It is necessary to show an example that human existence is directed and can see as purpose. "Übermensch/Superior-man". Man should mobilize all his power and turn to this example and continually try to overcome himself.

The concept of "Übermensch / Superior-Man", which is emphasized in the preface of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is also frequently found in other works. This concept presented a ground-breaking philosophical approach to the creation of modern heroic figure. This approach not only affects the hero figure but also in different areas.

For Nietzsche man has three basic typologies, and the first type of human includes crowd, wise, good, weak people, such as the name given to

the type of people. This type of human evaluates each event and situation in terms of the values judged by them in life. The second type of person is the one that evaluates the facts seen by their own eyes according to their natural value. Nietzsche describes this human type as tragic human, superior human. This type of human says “I am”. The third type is the form between the first two types of people. This type of person has a logic that is against the general moral values. This human species wants to be “itself”. It is the kind of person who is in search, who wants to give direction to himself and who says “I want”. (Sevinç, 2007: 8-9)

### **James Joyce’s Life and Intellectual Development**

James Augustine Aloysius Joyce was an Irish novelist, short story writer, and poet. He contributed to the modernist avant-garde and is regarded as one of the most influential and important authors of the 20th century. Born on February 2, 1882 in Dublin, Ireland, and died on January 13, 1941 in Zürich, Switzerland. He wrote plays such as *Exiles*, *Molly Bloom* and short stories like *The Dead*, *Eveline*, *Araby*, *The Sisters*. He began studying at Clongowes Wood College, a boarding Jesuit School in Ireland. He was the eldest of ten brothers and lived in a poor family because of his father’s extravagance. Joyce went to the Christian Brotherhood School for a few months after Clongowes Wood College. He was a successful student and admitted to Belvedere College in Jesuit, Dublin and University College in Dublin respectively. He is claimed to have lost his belief in Catholicism in those years (Waldock, 1967: 30-32). Here Jesuit priests were the instructors. However, Joyce focused more on language education than philosophy and theology. Later he developed an interest in literature and history and made an intensive reading in this context. Joyce wrote an essay called “Ibsen’s New Drama”. It was published in the *Fortnightly Review* in London in 1899. This achievement at a young age further increased Joyce’s desire to become a writer, and also enabled his family, friends and teachers to believe that he could be a writer. He began to write poetry and short prose texts he titled “Epiphanies”. Joyce decided to become a physician for living while dealing with literature but soon went to Paris and turned to literary criticism by giving up medicine. He developed an aesthetic theory influenced by Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas and Gustavo Flaubert. In 1904, George Russell ordered Joyce to write about the Irish to be published in *The Irish Homestead’s farmers*, which accounts for starting *the Dubliners*. Also in this period, “The Sisters”, “Eveline” and “After the Race” were published under the nickname Stephan Daedalus. Meanwhile, Joyce fell in love with a girl named Nora Barnacle, and eventually convinced her to leave Ireland with him.



## James Joyce's Philosophy and Literary Works

There are many works reflecting James Joyce's philosophical point of view, while universalism and cosmopolitan point of view stand out in these works, and the perspective of globalization is also seen. *Ulysses*, *Dubliners*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, his masterpieces, reflect his philosophy. In these books, *Ulysses* reveals Joyce's hero typology and literary approach, reflecting the philosophical dynamics of the modern heroic figure. In this context, the presentation of Joyce's point of view on his philosophy enabled him to be comparable with Nietzsche philosophy. The characters in Joyce's novels have an unfamiliar subjectivity for his time. In Joyce's conception, time, thoughts and perceptions are like windows that open in different directions. Joyce does not use the stream of consciousness until he creates the lines of his physical and spiritual portraits. The novel begins with narrative techniques (Odaci, 2009: 621-622). His each unique piece of Joyce's contributes to world literature and has influenced social sciences disciplines such as psychology, sociology, literature and philosophy. In addition, Joyce uses women, sexuality and physiology effectively. Joyce delved into the creation of a hero with a simple story in his literary works. This hero is beyond the borders of modern age. In *Ulysses*, Bloom is the best known example for a hero figure. Joyce's work on such subjects as city and chaos, death and despair also has a unique place in literature. The surface of life Joyce lived seemed always erratic and provisional. But its central meaning was directed as consciously as his work. The ingenuity with which he wrote his books was the same with which he forced the world to read them. The smiling affection he extended to Bloom and his other principal characters was the same that he gave to the members of his family. James Joyce as a modernist began his career as a writer with critical approaches to urban life. In this sense, *the Dubliners* entered the literature as Joyce's most important work on modern urban life (Suraiya, 2013: 2). Joyce criticizes the *Dubliners* in a rather severe manner. The *Dubliners* can be seen as an application area in Joyce's literary criticism. Joyce is one of the cornerstones in the critical approach to modern literature. For this reason Joyce can be described as one of the architects of the modernist critical approach. Joyce is an exceptional writer who can use slang, eroticism and obscenity in modern literature in an aesthetic style that breaks the moral, religious and ethical values of classical literary works. Joyce presented his criticism to readers with a modern style and language about the heroes and events he created in his books.

### Comparison of James Joyce's and Nietzsche's heroic perspectives

Both Friedrich Nietzsche and James Joyce do not favour tradition-

al. They have an unusual preference. They severely criticize normative moral values. Both authors focus on the individual self-development. They focus on the negative effects of social events on the individual. Some of the prominent hero figures in Nietzsche and Joyce's works are embodied as living examples in their philosophies and ideals. Nietzsche has ideas in a more advanced level than those of his own age in his approach to the subject of "mankind". He has developed an extraordinary style, especially in his approach to morality and people. This approach is the most important starting point for creating his own hero figure. Nietzsche's approach to humans has three basic typologies, First type of person: Crowd, wise, good people, weak people, such as the name given to the type of people. This type of human evaluates each event and situation in terms of the values judged by them in life. Second type of person: Is the one that evaluates the facts seen by their (who) own eyes according to their natural value. Nietzsche describes this human type as tragic human, superior human. This type of human says "I am". Third type of person: Is the form between the first two types of people. This type of person has a logic that is against the general moral values. This human species wants to be "itself". It is the kind of person who is in search, who wants to give direction to himself and who says "I want". This attitude to human nature is the key to showing clues to his ideal human quest and states that man's own nature is the priority that can create superior human beings. For example, the heroic character of Dionysian does not pursue certain moral rules and ideals, but according to the flow of life, depending on the values inherent in man's nature. This hero character considers entertainment, enjoying life, living and exceeding the limits imposed by the rules as a necessary pattern of behaviour. Dionysian character is more dominant. This approach is close to that of Joyce, but Joyce cares about creating the hero figure, and he also cares about the reader's understanding. Joyce's hero figure is described by a more traumatic and tragic life story than Nietzsche's hero figure. Both writers use mythological heroism as a key point in the creation of modern heroism. For Joyce, the analogy between the Odyssey epic and Ulysses is similar to that of Nietzsche's heroic tragedy over the Apollonian and Dionysian contrasts. The hero figures of both writers show features closer to the modern-age anti-hero character within the hero typologies. Both writers turn ordinary people into main characters in their works. These ordinary characters have expressed their psychological state, sociological structure, politics, nationalism and urban life through monologues or dialogues. Joyce and Nietzsche occasionally apply to Socratic ironies, monologues, associations, reflections and other literary or philosophical methods to make the heroic figures understandable. Religion is important for both writers. They carefully portray the rebellion of the heroic figure against the boundaries

and prohibitions that religion creates in the individual's life. The heroic figures of Nietzsche and Joyce are shaped by a process of change in the form of "escape", "isolation from society" or "separation from the birthplace" both in mythological and modern heroic figures. Joyce and Nietzsche's hero figures can be seen in modern hero typologies as well as in anti-hero characteristics but it also contains tragic hero motives. Especially Joyce's heroes can be included within this category of anti-heroes. This hero type has a specialized character. These heroes are outcasts and rebellious in society. Even if they are strange, they manage to appeal to audience. They do not believe that corruption in society and problems can be solved with certain norms. Tragic-heroes have obvious flaws. They cannot overcome their own troubles. They have been betrayed and are severely damaged. However, despite all these problems and flaws, they are finally justified.

### **Stephen Dedalus as a Nietzschean Character**

Stephen Dedalus has a weak personality as a creature compared to other children. There is no one around Dedalus who can understand him. He is also repeatedly trapped, alone in crowds, and eventually in an emotional emptiness. The real passion of Dedalus is to be a free artist, but because of the pressure of the society, he suffers an identity crisis and cannot reach this goal. During this identity crisis, Dedalus searches Christianity but he realizes that he does not a man of religion and refuses to serve as a priest. He wants to create his personality with his own free will and that is why he is constantly excluded from the society. In the end, he only takes refuge in himself, because he understands that what makes an artist is freedom. Dedalus wants to die because he feels no connection with society. But actually, he is energetic and full of life. He is constantly searching for himself. In the work *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young* this situation manifests itself as an individualization process. Dedalus has two important images in his life. The first one is "escape from society" and the second one is "being in a quest". This dichotomy of escape and search reflects the characteristics of modern hero typology and this situation of Dedalus is also identical to the search of the hero in Nietzsche's superior human ideal.

### **Conclusion**

Heroism has been one of the main subjects of literature throughout history. The heroic phenomenon can be considered in the mystical dimension, and modern episodes of heroism or anti-heroism are also developments in this field. A society is made up of culture, literature, art, religion, cuisine, folklore, etc., which are in a constant change throughout history and keeps abreast of each period. Culture connects people in a society and reveals the heroes that the community exemplifies. Heroic phenomenon is

a reflection of the society's history, as shown in literary works from oral literature in ancient times to modern works. The development of the heroic phenomenon is shaped in three main periods. These periods can be grouped into three main groups: antique (traditional), medieval and modern. In the period of mythological heroes, it is known that each geographical region had its God or Semi-God heroic figures with its own discourses. However, the general characteristics of these local gods are identical. Medieval heroic figures are influenced by ancient Greeks, Sumerians and Egyptians to some extent. In this period, the state and religion become the most important inspiration in determining heroic figures. However, today modernity has structural effects on the heroic figures. In the context of general aspects of heroism, Nietzsche and Joyce's approaches have been handled in the study. In this framework heroism in Nietzschean philosophy can be summarized as superior-man. According to Nietzsche, man's own self existence alone has no meaning. This can only be an instrumental element or catalyst for the transition to the superiors. The superman is not only a person, but the combination of all beings in the whole world. Things in the world have a specific meaning if they make it possible for a person to be a superman. A person who cannot be a superman is in chaos and turmoil, is in darkness, and will disappear if he is not saved from darkness. The main concern of the modern novel is the reflection of the concept of reality as described in the narrative. For this reason Joyce tries to carry the reality of man's mind to the novel. In order to achieve this goal, Joyce effectively presents the hero figure he creates in his own dream to the reader. In doing so, he uses a simple but deep literary style in his narratives. The most well-known case study in this context is *Ulysses*.

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