

**50-Was T.S. Eliot right about James Joyce?: A Subversive reading of *Ulysses*****Meltem UZUNOĐLU ERTEN<sup>1</sup>****Murat GÖÇ<sup>2</sup>**

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**Abstract**

The employment of myth among modern writers was highly praised by T.S.Eliot who pointed at James Joyce's *Ulysses* as an outstanding example of what he called "the mythical method". In his famous essay entitled *Ulysses, Order and Myth*, he not only answered the criticism directed at Joyce but also claimed that myth was the one and the only weapon needed by the modern writers in their battle against chaos and anarchy. However, although defended by Eliot in such fierce attitude, it is a question whether Joyce shared a similar purpose in writing his massive work. In *Ulysses*, Joyce uses the epic of *Odyssey* as the backbone of his plot while he clearly refers to the epic characters at the same time. Yet a careful look reveals something beyond Eliot's comments and understanding for we come across with a parodical approach towards religion, nationalism and the patriarchal order throughout the work, which totally subvert the dominant ideologies and established institutions of Western tradition. Joyce subverts not only myths that are deeply rooted in western mind but also language which he regards as a yoke put around his neck by the colonizer. Furthermore, his characters stand as the symbols of a future world where identities are multiplied and mingled whereas borders and metanarratives are destroyed. As a result, this paper aims to focus on Joyce's subversive attitude in *Ulysses* contrary to the conservative and traditionalist expectations of Eliot and on Joyce's suggestions on the "new man" who he believes is the future of mankind.

**Keywords:** James Joyce, T. S. Eliot, myth, the mythical method, subversion

**T.S. Eliot James Joyce hakkında haklı mıydı?: *Ulysses*'in ezber bozan bir okuması****Öz**

Mitlerin modern yazarlar tarafından kullanılması, buna "mitsel yöntem" adını veren ve James Joyce'un *Ulysses* romanını öne çıkan bir örnek olarak gösteren T.S. Eliot tarafından oldukça övülmüştür. *Ulysses, Order and Myth* isimli ünlü makalesinde, T.S. Eliot yalnızca Joyce'a yöneltile eleştirileri cevaplamakla kalmamış fakat aynı zamanda mitlerin kaos ve kargaşaya karşı savaşlarında modern yazarların ihtiyaç duyduğu tek silah olduğunu da iddia etmiştir. Bununla birlikte, Eliot tarafından böyle ateşli bir şekilde savunulmasına rağmen Joyce'un bu muazzam eserini yazarken benzer bir amaca sahip olup olmadığı da tartışmaya açıktır. *Ulysses*'i yazarken Joyce *Odyssey* destanını kitabının kurgusunun belkemiđi olarak kullanmış ve aynı zamanda açık biçimde destanın karakterlerine göndermelerde bulunmuştur. Yine de dikkatli bir bakış Eliot'un

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yorumları ve anlayışının ötesinde birşeyleri ortaya dökebilir. Bunun nedeni eser içinde din, milliyetçilik ve ataerkil düzene yöneltilen ve Batı geleneğinin baskın ideolojilerini ve kurumlarını tamamen ters yüz eden parodilerle karşılaşmamızdır. Joyce yalnızca batı düşüncesinin derinlerine kök salmış mitleri ters yüz etmekle kalmaz aynı zamanda sömürgeciler tarafından boynuna dolanan bir boyunduruk olarak nitelediği dili de yıkıma uğratar. Dahası, yarattığı karakterler kimliklerin çoğaldığı ve karıştığı, aynı zamanda sınırların ve büyük anlatıların yok edildiği geleceğin dünyasını sembolize etmektedirler. Sonuç olarak, bu çalışma Eliot'un muhafazakar ve gelenekçi beklentilerinin aksine Joyce'un *Ulysses*'de kullandığı yıkıcı tavra ve Joyce'un insanlığın geleceği olduğuna inandığı "yeni insan" ile ilgili fikirlerine odaklanmayı amaçlamaktadır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** James Joyce, T. S. Eliot, mit, mitsel yöntem, yıkıcılık

### Introduction

Looking back from the twenty-first century, Industrial Revolution and industrialization period that followed it seems to result in great disappointment for western societies in many ways. Life in a more agricultural based society and culture is clearly far from our current reality, however; it is still possible to understand that it must be a harder life in certain aspects. That is to say Industrial Revolution and its promises were largely welcomed by people. Basically, Industrial Revolution offered faster transport, improvements in communication, better agricultural products both in quality and quantity, more technological household items, better health standards, larger dwellings with so-called better life, work and educational opportunities and innumerable other options which were brand-new ideas for an old and less mobile world. It was a world in which people were full of hope for the future; a world that had no idea about how things were about to turn out.

Industrial Revolution created the cities into which a massive amount of people migrated for the before mentioned opportunities and advantages. Cities soon became crowded with a population who demanded jobs. Luckily, the newly founded factories demanded workers as well. There were children to be educated, crowds to be fed and new necessities born out of this new life style that created more work fields. Yet, it took not such a long time for people to discover that this life they embraced was not as brilliant as they had formerly dreamt. First of all, so many people living around one centre in the city brought its own separations, namely classes in the society, which was mainly shaped according to economical distinctions. People had dreamt about living in the cities but then they were trapped just around the skirts of the cities where educational opportunities were rare, crime was high and there was a constant struggle to survive because of the low income rates. They had left their houses and fields only to become free slaves of an economical system that served for the continuity of the industrial world.

People stuck between the cities and their rural backgrounds were suffering from a cultural crisis besides all other disappointments. Torn apart from their familiar surroundings and folk culture, individuals were left vulnerable, defenseless and open to any kind of manipulation and became members of a bulky mass rather than an organic society shaped by mutual meaningful experiences. This new class of working people and their families had lost their connection with nature and they were being forced by harsh conditions of city life. Work was hard and time consuming while no time and energy was left for social relations so much so that they were almost functioning like a piece of the machinery of the factories or the great industrial machines; namely the cities. Furthermore, like the broken pieces of a machine, they were easily replaced and thrown away while they were no longer of

use or when they could not keep up; an unfortunate fact that was far away from any humanity. All these caused a fragmentation in the mind and soul of the individuals who became more alienated to themselves and their environment day by day. Still the 19th century tried to keep the faith in the ideals first presented by the Enlightenment and in the idea of progress that followed with the Industrial Revolution. It was supposed to be a progress in work conditions, economy, education and health and all that made human life better and more worth living.

The World War I started in 1914. It had such a great impact both on the individuals and the societies that it destroyed everything connected with the old world. A world on which no safe place was left and every nation was fighting against one another was beyond imagination. Although the war ended in 1918, in the aftermath the survivors had to face a huge loneliness characterized by the dominance of feelings of insecurity and uncertainty. The experience of such an extensive destruction stood on the opposite of the desired expectations of humanity from science, reason and technology, all outcomes of the Enlightenment and industrialization.

It was clearly a natural outcome of such great changes in the society to find place in literature. Indeed literature functioned not only as a mirror reflecting the reality of the society but also as a medium that directs the society out of the chaotic atmosphere in which it was trapped. In literature and particularly in novel, the early 20th century tendency was towards a modern approach in direct contrast to the 19th century novel, which was highly realistic in reflecting daily life and moral in purpose for "Victorian culture accepted literature as socially important, and allowed it to take over some of the functions previously fulfilled by religion. In order to do this, it had to be ethically orientated" (Faulkner, 1977, pp. 15/16). This meant a shared reality and moral understanding of the age. However, the previously mentioned changes made such a common reality and morality impossible. That is to say, modern writers employed diverse ideas and beliefs and they were highly experimental in their writing for their perception of the world was far different from their predecessors. Within modernity, "myth, structure and organization in a traditional sense collapse[d], and not only for formal reasons. The crisis [was] a crisis of culture; it often involve[d] an unhappy view of history-so that the Modernist writer [was] not simply the artist set free, but the artist under specific, apparently historical strain" (Bradbury and McFarlane, 1991, p.26) with certain obligations to meet.

One of the popular tendencies of modern writers of the period was the employment of myths and mythological patterns in their works. To put it simply, they were in search of a long lost perfection and unity by creating a connection between the modern and the ancient world. As T.S. Eliot passionately advises in his 1921 essay *Tradition and the Individual Talent*, the modern writer should act in "a continual surrender of himself as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable" than his personal views for "the progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality" (1950, p. 52). Only by doing so, modern writers could achieve the desired connection with the past that is the source of the whole Western tradition and become a member of an age old community, which will provide an emotional, psychological as well as ideological feeling of unity for both the individual and the society again. Thus, literature gained a new mission as a result of the "desire to lift art above the meaningless course of everyday life, to achieve what became known as 'absolute art' " (Blanning, 1996, p. 261) by placing the timeless myth over history. Creating a connection between past and today was the outcome of a "strikingly unhistorical yearning for a supposed past golden age" (Hewitt, 1988, p.131).

When James Joyce published his highly experimental novel *Ulysses*, it gave way to endless controversy. He was mostly criticized for the brave style of his work that revolutionized novel as a genre. In his 1923 essay *Ulysses, Order and Myth*, T.S. Eliot quoted Richard Aldington who frankly articulated his views on Joyce by saying, “I say, moreover that when Mr. Joyce, with his marvellous gifts, uses them to disgust us with mankind, he is doing something which is false and a libel on humanity” (qtd. in Eliot, 88, p.2). However, Eliot did not share Aldington’s comments on Joyce and *Ulysses*. On the contrary, he defended Joyce’s style in this specific work. For him, *Ulysses* could be called an epic if not a novel because “if not a novel, that is simply because the novel, instead of being a form, was simply the expression of an age which had not sufficiently lost all form to feel the need of something stricter” (Eliot, 1988, p.4). Eliot did not finish there. He not only defended Joyce but also praised him; specifically his usage of myth. He answered all criticism directed at Joyce and suggested *Ulysses* as a perfect example of making myth a part of modern literature for myth in his opinion was “a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history” (Eliot, 1988, p.5) in his widely known quotation.

Myth in literature became the new trend since it offered timeless truths deeply rooted in western tradition. Compared with the unpredictabilities of the modern world, it was a safe realm where the writers and the society in general craved for. It was promising an order that takes power from the past in contrast to the chaos experienced by modern man; it was a “way in which the modernist writer has felt able to give coherence to his work, the myths often being of the most general kind, concerned with death and regeneration, the cycle of nature, the order of the seasons, though sometimes, as in the case of *Ulysses*, more specifically literary” (Faulkner, 1977, p.18). Just like “reality” which “was not reflected by language but *produced* by it” (Eagleton, 1996, p.94), this was a conscious attempt for creating reality out of myths. Literature was given mission because “once outside of history, the work is available as a paradigm of paradise, the antithesis of the fallen world, and, as a product of man, a means for him to transcend the fallen, time-bound world” (Onopa, 1973, p.372). Apparently, these made *Ulysses* a perfect example of “the mythical method”, as he called it, for Eliot.

Arguments about myth and its functions in literature did not stop there and could not reach a settlement as expected. Many critics pointed at a turning point in human history in terms of myth; that is the transition from oral tradition into a written tradition. To start from the beginning, one must remember that myths functioned in multiple ways for the humankind throughout history. They acted as stories mostly sacred for societies, marking some memorable events and transferring experiences while dealing with the realities of being human at the same time. They were meaningful both for the individual and the society he was part of. They served in a religious manner as well; speaking of eternal truth. Yet, with historical changes at the background, there came a time when myths were transferred into the world of written texts, which impoverished the bards who formerly enjoyed the freedom and flexibility of oral tradition. For instance, the parallelism between this change in the world of Greek myths and the social shift from the dominancy of a matriarchal structure to a patriarchal one as a result of the historical changes in the region is a striking one. Turning back to the growing dominance of written tradition, it can be said that “through writing the text was fixed in a way that would have been impossible in oral composition. In an illiterate tradition, each singing, even by the same poet, yields a new and a different poem produced from the basic building blocks in the poet’s memory; within a few generations ...even a work as large as the *Odyssey* would become so drastically altered as to be no longer the same poem” (Parry, 1966, p.189). Speaking of the shift in Greek culture again, following the struggle between the matriarchal and the newly arrived patriarchal systems, the society negotiated on a religious understanding according to which local beliefs continued their existence

under the supreme reign of Zeus as the god of gods, a consensus indeed that first weakens the old beliefs and then guarantees their destruction. Likewise, as a part of the same process, the written tradition put an end to the polyphony and the plurality of myths for they were harshly criticized for not offering absolute, rational, single and observable answers and solutions to the problems. Myth was the “paradigmatic of a pre-philosophical world of irrational storytellers” (Morgan, 2004, p.30). The separation was so clear that “myth’ originally meant ‘speech’ or ‘word’, but in time what the Greeks called *mythos* was separated out from, and deemed inferior to *logos*. The former came to signify fantasy; the latter, rational argument” (Coupe, 2009, p.10). Thus, *mythos* was labeled with a negative reputation while *logos* announced its superiority. Although people never lost their interest in the field of myths, the most remarkable turning back to myths took place in the 20<sup>th</sup> century when literature decided to give an ear to them with the hope of finding the salvation they could offer.

In 20<sup>th</sup> century, not only Eliot’s “mythical method” but also a group of people called structuralists felt interest in myths. The linguistic theories they developed extended themselves to myth studies for it was the aim of structuralists “to find an order behind what is given to us as a disorder” (Lévi-Strauss, 2001, p.3). It was Roland Barthes who carried the matter from the linguistic sphere into a more cultural one. For Barthes, the myth is a second system working very similar to language in the arbitrary nature between the signifier and the signified. In his preface to the 1970 edition of *Mythologies*, Barthes clarifies his application of Saussure’s theory and suggests his approach as an “ideological critique bearing on the language of so-called mass-culture” which aims to “account in detail for the mystification which transforms petit-bourgeois culture into a universal nature” (1991, p.8). In the following chapters of his book, he exemplifies the 20<sup>th</sup> century myths that were created out of everyday realities and how they achieved to pass as unquestionable. Barthes claims that “myth generally represents itself as always already complete by conceiving its own historical development” (Barthes, 1991, p.177) and in it “the meaning is already complete, [and] it postulates a kind of knowledge, a past, a memory, a comparative order of facts, ideas, decisions” (Barthes, 1991, p.116). That is how it gains a naturalness. He explains this process of naturalization and says “a conjuring trick has taken place; it has turned reality inside out, it has emptied it of history and has filled it with nature, it has removed from things their human meaning so as to make them signify a human insignificance... Myth does not deny things, on the contrary, its function is to talk about them; simply, it purifies them, it makes them innocent, it gives them a natural and eternal justification” (Barthes, 1991, pp.142-143). Through the naturalization process, myths gain a fixed meaning that substitutes history. In other words, substitution of history by myth turns out to be “a possession of history in order to ensure one’s place in history” (Barber, 1983-4, p.32). According to this new understanding, “myth becomes a form of ideology that attempts to pass itself off as absolute truth, as absence of ideology. But this naturalization of myth is accomplished by sealing myth off from history” (Booker, 1997, p.19). Thus, myth gains a place in the imperfectable and unquestionable timeless realm which is “the very beginning of time, outside of historical time” (Csapo, 2009, p.220). As Umberto Eco states, this is an effort “to tame history” (1989, p.39). History is tamed to turn into “a strong myth, ... the last great myth... a myth that at once subtended the possibility of an ‘objective’ enchainment of events and causes” (Baudrillard, 1994, p.47), which creates an ideological weapon in the formation of societies. Or, to put more briefly, it is “[transforming] history into nature” (Barthes, 1991, p.128). Finally, in contrast to what Eliot put forward in regard to myths and their role in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Barthes associated them more with power relations and ideology.

Joyce seems not to be interested in what the critics were telling about him. He was mostly interested in the “enigmas and puzzles” he carefully placed in *Ulysses* and which he believed was “the only way of

insuring one's immortality" (Ellmann, 1982, p.521). However, having a closer look at Joyce and the process and progress that made him the author of *Ulysses*, it is hard to agree with Eliot and his opinions on Joyce. Joyce's employment of myth seems rather close to Barthes' approach to the issue in emphasizing a subversive character and his personal experiences and opinions on his native country prove that he would rather prefer such a subversive perspective.

Before writing *Ulysses*, Joyce had already explained the progress of his own views over religion and nationalism in Ireland in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. In this semi-autobiographical novel, Joyce was rejecting the repression of religion and nationalism relatively only to finally announce that "[he]will not serve in which [he]no longer believe[s], whether it calls itself [his]home, [his] fatherland, or [his]church" (Joyce, 2011, p.394). His rejection is so powerful that he closes all the ways and denies negotiation by claiming that his only weapons in his struggle against those forces are "silence, exile, and cunning" (Joyce, 2011, p.394) besides his belief in artistic creation. In this book, Stephen as the literary reflection of young Joyce experienced first a religious character, then a nationalist one which were concluded by a total denial of both only to awaken an artistic soul in him. In *Ulysses*, that soul became the way that leads to the emergence of a new type of human who is full of promises for future in Joyce's view. In other words this is a new man represented by Leopold Bloom whose path at some point crosses with Stephen; the artist who had the courage to deny and create anew.

In order to develop an in depth understanding, one must keep in mind that Joyce's ideas on religious and nationalist matters were more mature while he was working on *Ulysses*. He had formerly experienced the dead ends of both ideals and was in search of a better option both for his homeland Ireland and beyond. He had escaped from "what he regarded as Ireland's moribund parochialism and narrow Catholic nationalism" (Parsons, 2007, p.4), yet his writing proves that he never lost his emotional ties, which forced him to offer solutions. Certainly, Ireland was an unsolved matter for Joyce throughout his life and he felt resentful towards his fellowmen for "[his] ancestors threw off their language and took another" and "allowed a handful of foreigners to subject them" (Joyce, 2011, p.323). He was unwilling to "pay in [his] own life and person debts they made" (Joyce, 2011, p.323). He believed that "the Church [was] ... the enemy of Ireland: but ... her time [was] almost up" (Ellmann, 1992, p.125) and he was "fighting a battle with every religious and social force in Ireland" (Ellmann, 1972, p.xv). Joyce hated both "the domination of British colonialism and the cultural paralysis of Irish nationalism" (Parsons, 2007, p.123). Church was to blame for being "far from providing the inspiration for a positive and healthy community, instead undermines any hope of establishing such a community in Ireland, thus assuring that the Irish people will not be able to work together to throw off their oppressors" (Booker, 1997, p.71). Similarly, he was aware of "the historical oppression of colonial Ireland at the hands of the British Empire" (Booker, 1997, p.166) as a result of which he "felt a stranger in [his] own country" (Ellmann, 1992, p.173). As all indicate Joyce interpreted British imperialism and the Catholic Church in addition to blind nationalism as obstacles that block any hope, development or future for Ireland. Furthermore, throughout the years his writing became more and more an "attempt to declare the autonomy of the self by denying the authority of the father and the values of the country" (Rosenfield, 1967, p.39) only to replace them with better ones.

It was his use of *The Odyssey*, the great epic of western tradition, that made *Ulysses* a perfect example for Eliot's "mythical method". However, reading Joyce's mythical use from a subversive perspective offers a brandnew experience; which is the interest of this paper. Probably, it may be more helpful first to focus on why Joyce preferred such a subversive style before dealing with how he made a tool out of it. Certainly, *Ulysses* may be read as "the reclaiming of the past from the hegemony of colonialist and

patriarchal history was an increasingly important impulse” (Parsons, 2007, p.123). Being frankly subversive both in content and style, its purpose is to “critique the dominant historical narratives by which national cultural identity is formed and sustained” (Parsons, 2007, p.123). With the help of the promising polyphony of novel as a form, it becomes “the parodic subversion of dominant, patriarchal, imperial, canonical history and literature” (Parsons, 2007, p.126) while it adds new dimensions to the Irish problems. And when it comes to his decision about *The Odyssey*, it may be because of the fact that Homer is “more than any other figure of the historical past...a fundamental force in the collective consciousness of humanity” (Arkins, 1999, p.47). Homer is buried deep in the western mind so much so that “the Greeks began that Western literature and Homer began Greek literature” (Arkins, 1999, p.47). Furthermore, “for the Greeks and later Western readers alike, [the Odyssey] has served as a model and a mirror of both individual and cultural self-definition” (Schein, 1996, p.3). Apart from such significance, the work was “the most human in world literature” (Borach, 1954, p.325) according to Joyce with all the good and bad in it. Joyce also had a belief in a historical connection between Irish people and the Greeks as a result of his historical research, which made the text suitable for his end.

Although Joyce chose Homer’s text as a reference to the plot of *Ulysses*, the novel contained many distressing elements towards the mainstream perception of values concerning nationalism, religion and patriarchy in Ireland. In contrast to what Eliot understood, Joyce was writing his own subversive version of *The Odyssey*. The original text by Homer was authoritative and widely accepted, yet Joyce dared to question it armed by subversive and destructive character of parody. He was battling with metanarratives like loyalty, heroism and morality in a more general sense. Having its roots in Aristotle’s definition and description, parody served for many purposes throughout centuries and finally became a literary device that either submits to the authority of tradition or creates a mocking effect by imitating in a critical way. The first purpose is what Eliot means by suggesting “the mythical method” while the second becomes Joyce’s preference. Instead of presenting “all that is considered universal and eternal, and therefore unchangeable” (Hutcheon, 2004, p.8), Joyce challenges these metanarratives. According to Simon Dentith, subversive parody “typically attacks the official word, mocks the pretensions of authoritative discourse, and undermines the seriousness” (2002, p.20) and transforms texts. Since “effective parody must be transformative; it must change the way we look at the texts being parodied” (Booker, 1991, p.95). Linda Hutcheon describes parody “a threatening, even anarchic force, one that puts into question the legitimacy of other texts” (2000, p.75) and “acts as a consciousness-raising device, preventing the acceptance of the narrow, doctrinaire, dogmatic views of any particular ideological group” (Hutcheon, 2000, p.103). Also for Mikhail Bakhtin, parody is “the creation of a decrowning double” or “world turned inside out” (1999, p.127). Similarly, for Dentith parody, with its subversive potential, is “both a symptom and a weapon in the battle between popular cultural energies and the forces of authority which seek to control them” (2002, p.23). Dual character hidden potentially in parody caused the controversy upon Joyce’s employment of it for *Ulysses*. However, a more careful postmodern reading reveals Joyce’s purpose which “differs radically from conventional notions of modernist literature as culturally elitist, historically detached, and more interested in individual psychology than in social reality” (Booker, 1997, p.16). That is to say, Joyce is extremely different from other modern writers both in style and content while at the same time his focus is on social matters rather than on the individual. Furthermore, his employment of ‘myth’ in a Barthesian sense, although he was writing within the first quarter of the century, proves how beyond his time he stood, which gives him a postmodern character rather than modern.

Joyce attacks the great epic of the western world by making it the backbone of his plot in *Ulysses* in addition to political, religious and cultural myths imposed on Ireland by the British Empire, The

Catholic Church and the patriarchal western tradition respectively. He believes that the metanarratives created by these myths are the greatest obstacles in front of any possibility for peace and development in Ireland. He claims the repression caused by these authorities prevent a better future for his homeland which directs him to a subversive and destructive attitude only to rewrite a national epic in which diversity, tolerance and humanism is valued.

### 1. Stephen: A subversive Telemachus

Joyce's "Telemachiad" section of *Ulysses* goes in parallel with Homer's "Telemachia". Stephen is a subversive Telemachus, who is likewise in a worried situation for his country. Back home from Europe, he loses his mother and is somehow homeless just like his Homeric counterpart. He lives with a friend named Buck Mulligan and Mulligan's British friend Haines, with whose arrival he decides not to live there anymore. The conversation between three men, Haines being the British invader, is significant in terms of understanding Joyce's views on imperial and religious 'myths' imposed by the British Empire and the Catholic Church on Ireland. To make it more clear, Buck Mulligan stands for the Irish man Joyce objects for he is hand in hand with Britain and British culture. According to Mulligan, the British invasion of Ireland is natural as his friendship with Haines indicates. Haines, by the way, is "a literary tourist in quest of Celtic wit and twilight" (Gilbert, 1955, p.100). He simply "tries to collect Stephen's sayings" and listens him with "an outsider's interest in someone whom he considers to be an exotic insider" (Castle, 2001, p.213), while Stephen is alienated by both during the conversation. In return, Stephen identifies his friend Mulligan as "a jester at the court of his master, indulged and disesteemed, winning a clement master's praise" bitterly. Moreover, Stephen thinks there is no friendship between the two, but rather Mulligan is Haine's servant, thus making Stephen "a server of a servant" (Joyce, 2010, p.11). He feels stressed thinking Haines' invasion of the tower: "He wants that key. It is mine, I paid the rent. Now I eat his salt bread. Give him the key too. All. He will ask for it. That was in his eyes." (Joyce, 2010, p.19). Still, he is unable to prevent this invasion. Instead of this, he declares his mind directly and says: "I am the servant of two masters, ... , an English and an Italian," and explains these two masters as "The Imperial British state, ... , and the holy Roman catholic and apostolic church" (Joyce, 2010, p.19).

In response, Haines admits that British people "have treated [Irish people] rather unfairly", for which "it seems history is to blame" (Joyce, 2010, p.19). However, Joyce interprets this as a denial of "any English responsibility for the treatment of Ireland, placing the blame instead at the doorstep of some impersonal force called 'history'" (Booker, 1997, p.223). Moreover, what hurts Stephen is Mulligan's role here for "a man's worst enemies shall be those of his own house and family" (Joyce, 2010, p.185). Stephen sees a 'myth', in the ideological sense of Barthes, where Mulligan sees nature. Like Telemachus and real-life Joyce, Stephen is only armed with "silence, exile, and cunning" (Joyce, 2011, p.394) and thus he leaves the tower quietly.

Not only British colonization but also religious matters find a place in the same chapters. Mulligan appears in a dressing gown while mimicking a church ritual, speaks in Latin and pretends as if his shaving bowl is full of holy water. The Ballad of Joking Jesus by Mulligan includes lines that mock the miracles of Jesus such as, "my mother's a Jew, my father's a bird" or "if anyone thinks that I amn't divine/he will get no free drinks when I'm making the wine" (Joyce, 2010, p.18). Certainly, Stephen is not a believer in the classical sense of the word and thus he is not offended by Mulligan's jokes. Rather, Stephen's religious thoughts are always connected with his mother who is now nothing but a "wasted body" (Joyce, 2010, p.5) for him. He creates a connection between the image of her mother's decaying



body and the dog carcass he sees on the beach and concludes both his country and the church that he associates with his mother are also “bestly dead” (Joyce, 2010, p.8). When his mother asks him to repent in a dream, Stephen is mad with fury because his country and religion, represented by his mother, are only disappointments in his experience. His emotions for his dead mother are usually a mixture of pity and disgust. These are exactly the same emotions he had for the dead dog, which is turned into god in a word play and becomes “a Lord of Death, hangman god, a ghoul, a butcher” (Gilbert, 1955, p.345) instead of the merciful god of the Catholic church. Finally he calls God just “a black crack of noise in the street” (Joyce, 2010, p.357).

Stephen, the 20<sup>th</sup> century Telemachus, remembers “there was a time when this house was by way of being prosperous and respectable” (Homer, 1991, p.10) and knows that the invaders of his house “are eating [him] out of house and home” (Homer, 1991, p.10). Whereas Telemachus is offered divine help by Athena, Stephen is completely alone. Although both know that “the destruction of [their houses] is an injustice” (Homer, 1991, p.19), only Telemachus shows the courage expected from a hero. But what about Stephen? While Telemachus prepares a plan and sets off a journey in search of his father, The Joycean counterpart sits down to have breakfast with his enemies despite his silent protest. He lacks the courage necessary to take any action, instead he turns into his thoughts and inner world. Like his namesake, he constructs a symbolical labyrinth because his awareness but the passivity at the same time “fill [his] heart with a pain for which [he finds] no cure” (Homer, 1991, p.19) and finally he confesses that “[he’s] not a hero” (Joyce, 2010, p.4). It is also worthy to emphasize how disadvantageous Stephen is in terms of parental relations. While Telemachus, Odysseus and Penelope are the members of a family in constant struggle to overcome their destiny, the most remarkable thing in Dedalus family is a break down. Stephen wanders around the city whole day yet, he never has the intention of coming across with his father, Simon Dedalus. This fact is surely in accordance with the general condition of the whole country. Like Telemachus who denies the false fathers in the identity of the suitors, Stephen denies both the false fathers of Ireland represented by the British presence in his homeland and his own father. In his denial, he unconsciously searches for a true parent who will eventually become Leopold Bloom. Similar to the case with the father, Stephen denies his mother, too. The mother, a representation of Ireland and Catholicism becomes an obstacle and symbol of oppression, from which he runs away while Penelope of the Homer’s text is a supporter of her son and a symbol of unity and motherland that embraces one. Completely alone and unguided, Stephen repeatedly puts forward his thoughts on his motherland. He believes that “[he] must kill the priest and the king” and “[he has] no king [himself] for the moment” (Joyce, 2010, pp.507-508). He is unwilling to sacrifice himself for his country, but says: “let my country die for me!” (Joyce, 2010, p.508).

Stephen’s ideas also grow more mature throughout the chapters. For instance, when he exchanges ideas with Mr. Deasy, he is more brave than he was with Haines. He objects the mainstream ideas of Mr. Deasy “whose wisdom consists of clichés rather than experience” (Schwarz, 1987, p.22.) When they disagree about ‘history’, Stephen seems to be aware of the fact that “the ‘history’ [Mr Deasy] expounds is pure ideology” (Parrinder, 1984, p.124). Therefore, he is brave in rejecting Mr Deasy’s definition of history as absolute and stable as the truth of God. He does not accept his God, either. Daniel R. Schwarz points that “unlike Telemachus who listens respectfully to the advice of his elder, Stephen is barely polite to Deasy and even more disdainful in his private responses” (1987, p.22). He does not feel respect for him since he “is part of the English-Irish establishment that Stephen sees himself unwillingly serving” (Schwarz, 1987, p.22). As suggested by Patrick Parrinder, Stephen beats Mr. Deasy by calling God only a shout in the street, a shout but nothing more and that will wake him

from the ‘nightmare of history’ and the paralysis caused by “the dead-weight of history” (1984, p.124) together with religious oppression.

## 2. Bloom: A subversive Odysseus

A complete perception of Joyce’s point concerning politics and religion needs an interpretation of Leopold Bloom as well. As Stephen stands for the modern counterpart of Homeric Telemachus, Bloom is the modern Odysseus in *Ulysses*, wandering around Dublin simultaneously with Stephen and finally they come across towards the end of their journeys. Although Joyce continues his subversion of political and religious authorities in the identity of Bloom, it is crucial to emphasize that while Stephen criticizes the authority of the imperial power in Ireland, Bloom is mostly concerned with the concept of nationalism.

To start with, it is valid to claim that Bloom is a subversion of Odysseus in multiple ways. The basic point here is Bloom’s daily journey around the city full of everyday trivia reflected through parodies compared to the heroic journey of the Homeric character. Deborah Parsons’ summary of this ordinary day is as follows: “Leopold Bloom, an advertising salesman whose wife is cheating on him, who buys a kidney for his breakfast, picks his toe-nails and masturbates in public, may seem an unlikely parallel for the wily Greek” (2007, p.62). Throughout this ordinary day, the readers of Joyce follow Bloom’s thoughts rather than his actions, which enables one to track Joyce’s mocking tone. Being a Jewish man with Hungarian family roots, Bloom has a distant position both to the Catholic Church and Irish history and this gives him more critical freedom when compared with Stephen.

At the very early hours of his day, Bloom attends a funeral and visits Mrs. Purefoy struggling to give birth, during both he has lots of time to entertain his thoughts on life and death. Dealing with both subjects in his mind, his thoughts become critical about the men of religion with whom he comes across on both occasions:

“Wonderful organisation certainly, goes like clockwork. Confession. Everyone wants to. Then I will tell you all. Penance. Punish me, please. Great weapon in their hands. More than doctor or solicitor. Woman dying to. And I schschschschsch. And did you chachachachachacha? And why did you? Look down at her ring to find an excuse. Whispering gallery walls have ears. Husband learn to his surprise. God’s little joke. Then out she comes. Repentance skindeep. Lovely shame. Pray at an altar. Hail Mary and Holy Mary. Flowers, incense, candles melting. Hide her blushes. Salvation army blatant imitation. Reformed prostitute will address the meeting. How I found the Lord. Squareheaded chaps those must be in Rome: they work the whole show.” (Joyce, 2010, p.73)

Thus Bloom becomes the mouthpiece of Joyce. Joyce’s voice is continuously heard through him as it was through Stephen. Like Stephen watching the dead body of the dog, Bloom thinks about the nasty details of life and death in a grotesque way during the funeral. He remembers his dead son Rudy on the way to the cemetery when his memory shifts on the day of his son’s conception:

“If little Rudy had lived. See him grow up. Hear his voice in the house. Walking beside Molly in an Eton suit. My son. Me in his eyes. Strange feeling it would be. From me. Just a chance. Must have been that morning in Raymond terrace she was at the window, watching the two dogs at it by the wall of the cease to do evil. And the sergeant grinning up. She had that cream gown on with the rip she never stitched. Give us a touch, Poldy. God, I’m dying for it. How life begins.” (Joyce, 2010, p.79).

Bloom’s sexual memory touches upon a fact ignored by the Catholic Church indeed. The Church acts as if life starts suddenly without a reason. Instead of this miracle in front of people’s eyes, with the

intention of ignoring the pleasures of the flesh, the Church focuses on the end of the life journey and brings forth an idealized vision of Heaven, which is mostly imaginary. However, Bloom sees the power of life even at the cemetery, where people are “in a hurry to bury” (Joyce, 2010, p.85) the dead body to turn back the ordinary life of everyday. This is because there are “funerals all over the world everywhere every minute” (Joyce, 2010, p.90), which makes also death an ordinary event. Bloom is curious about whether “the news go about whenever a fresh one is let down” among the dead and calls it an “underground communication” (Joyce, 2010, p.103). He thinks about being under the ground and follows the rat in the cemetery with his eyes. While listening the priest, he, this time, mocks resurrection and think as follows:

“Your heart perhaps but what price the fellow in the six feet by two with his toes to the daisies? No touching that. Seat of the affections. Broken heart. A pump after all, pumping thousands of gallons of blood every day. One fine day it gets bunged up and there you are. Lots of them lying around here: lungs, hearts, livers. Old rusty pumps: damn the thing else. The resurrection and the life. Once you are dead you are dead. That last day idea. Knocking them all up out of their graves. Come forth, Lazarus! And he came fifth and lost the job. Get up! Last day! Then every fellow mousing around for his liver and his lights and the rest of his traps. Find damn all of himself that morning.” (Joyce, 2010, p.94)

Through the parody of resurrection, Joyce denies the idea of a promised world after death. What is more important for him is the celebration of worldly life. He even sympathizes “whores in Turkish graveyards” who make “love among the tombstones”, because they remind “in the midst of death we are in life” which makes “both ends meet” (Joyce, 2010, p.97). Likewise, dead bodies giving life to vegetation is a more entertaining thought than Heaven for Bloom:

“Every man his price. Well preserved fat corpse gentleman, epicure, invaluable for fruit garden. A bargain. By carcass of William Wilkinson, auditor and accountant, lately deceased, three pounds thirteen and six. With thanks. I daresay the soil would be quite fat with corpse manure, bones, flesh, nails, charnelhouses. Dreadful. Turning green and pink, decomposing. Rot quick in damp earth. The lean old ones tougher. Then a kind of a tallow kind of a cheesy. Then begin to get black, treacle oozing out of them. Then dried up. Deathmoths. Of course the cells or whatever they are go on living. Changing about. Live for ever practically. Nothing to feed on feed on themselves.” (Joyce, 2010, p.97).

Joyce’s realistic but grotesque approach to death is a rebellion against the widespread tendency of the Catholic Church that insists on mystifying death and overvaluing the soul rather than the body. Instead of the glorification of spiritual material after death, Joyce prefers bodily realities in a prodical way as a reaction and a way of subversion. Following the discussion about death, he mocks the life of a priest with similar honesty:

“Holy water that was, I expect. Shaking sleep out of it. He must be fed up with that job, shaking that thing over all the corpses they trot up. What harm if he could see what he was shaking it over. Every mortal day a fresh batch: middleaged men, old women, children, women dead in childbirth, men with beards, baldheaded business men, consumptive girls with little sparrow’s breasts. All the year round he prayed the same thing over them all and shook water on top of them: sleep. On Dignam now.

-In paradisum.

Said he was going to paradise or is in paradise. Says that over everybody. Tiresome kind of a job. But he has to say something.” (Joyce, 2010, p.93)

Bloom observes how ignorant and cruel a priest is especially towards women: “Birth every year almost. That’s in their theology or the priest won’t give the poor woman the confession, the absolution. Increase and multiply. Did you ever hear such an idea? Eat you out of house and home. No families

themselves to feed. Living on the fat of the land” (Joyce, 2010, p.134). Joyce describes this food chain later more in detail: “the angel of death kills the butcher and he kills the ox and the dog kills the cat. Sounds a bit silly till you come to look into it well. Justice it means but it’s everybody eating everyone else. That’s what life is after all” (Joyce, 2010, p.109). This food chain simply shows the Catholic Church at the top in Joyce’s mind for it feeds itself on the people of Ireland.

Joyce does not discuss whether God exists or not. It simply does not matter. His point is criticizing the religious institution and people who are speaking in the name of God. With this aim, he subverts the famous prayer, “Our father who art not in heaven” (Joyce, 2010, p.204), or bitterly reminds that “the man upstairs is dead” (Joyce, 2010, p.214), for God is not interested in the miseries of people which is sad. Joyce dreams God “sitting on his throne, sucking red jujubes white” and drinking “the Blood of the Lamb” because “God wants blood victim” (Joyce, 2010, p.133). His God is “the playwright who wrote the folio of this world and wrote it badly” because it is full of mistakes: “he gave us light first and the sun two days later” (Joyce, 2010, p.191). God’s Church plays the music of a “Hushaby. Lullaby.” (Joyce, 2010, p.255) to console the believers. They just tell believers: “Pray for us. And pray for us. And pray for us”, like in an advertisement: “Good idea the repetition. Same thing with ads. Buy from us. And buy from us” (Joyce, 2010, p.341). The Catholic Church is a worldly and materialist institution, in the eyes of Joyce, despite its rigid rejection of the world for the believers paradoxically.

Bloom has a word not only on religion but also on politics. His distant position to the Catholic and Irish majority make him a stranger in the society and an open target for nationalism at the same time. Cyclops chapter is commented as “the most politically committed piece of fiction that Joyce ever produced” (Parrinder, 1984, p.172). In this chapter, Bloom exchanges ideas with a group of people in a pub, each of whom represent various voices in the Irish society of the time. Bloom finds himself in the middle of hatred and humiliation at some point of the chapter which is indeed about “a rejection of the violence and hatred engendered by two opposing political systems, British imperialism and Irish nationalism” (Parrinder, 1984, p.172). Joyce puts him there in opposition to the Citizen, to emphasize the tendency towards tolerance and understanding in his ‘new man’ represented by Bloom in contrast to irrationalism in the nationalism of the Citizen. While Bloom calls himself Irish for he was just born there and is not interested in people’s personal historical backgrounds, the Citizen and friends are trapped within the inflexibility of nationalism. Bloom is not a fanatic like the others who are in “nationalist attempts to romanticize and heroize their past” (Booker, 1997, p.22). He is calm during the discussion and finally indicates “love...the opposite of hatred” (Joyce, 2010, p.301) as a peaceful solution to the problems of his society. Love, as Bloom suggests, will create “mixed races and mixed marriage” (Joyce, 2010, p.433). He is already a mixture and a stranger in Ireland: his nationality and religion all different from the others around. He is exposed to prejudices, hatred, violence and discrimination. Yet, his only reaction is listening opposing ideas in a kind manner. What he prizes is humanity and communication in contrast to the religious and political authorities who claim the opposite.

Bloom is “a cultured allroundman” (Joyce, 2010, p.211), either “Everyman or Noman” (Joyce, 2010, p.631), just a representation of “the humane values that will lead Ireland out of its twin bondage to Catholicism and Britain” (Schwarz, 1987, p.43). He is opposite of Odysseus, not a hero, an ordinary man with an ordinary job and family and a life full of simple successes and failures. What makes him a hero is his sympathy towards Stephen, motherless children, women and animals. Eventually, when he comes across with Stephen, he is cool headed despite their heated conversation and says, “a soft answer turns away wrath” (Joyce, 2010, p.551). He is somehow an elder version or future of Stephen,

he is Stephen's way out of his labyrinth. At this point, Stephen finds the father he is looking for. Bloom is the guide more than Simon Dedalus for Stephen. Stephen is heart broken in a world where "a brother is easily forgotten as an umbrella" (Joyce, 2010, p.190). Yet, Bloom guides him to alternative solutions for the Irish problem. Their relationship is left open ended by Joyce at the end of *Ulysses*. Still, it is obvious that they have the chance of developing a bond and there is hope both for Stephen and his country and "the only solution proposed for Ireland, we begin to realize, is the humanistic Bloom who is committed to life in the face of death" (Schwarz, 1987, p.116). Bloom sees the reality of life and believes in the power of it:

"One born every second somewhere. Other dying every second. Since I fed the birds five minutes. Three hundred kicked the bucket. Other three hundred born, washing the blood off, all are washed in the blood of the lamb, bawling maaaaaa. Cityful passing away, other cityful coming, passing away too: other coming on, passing on. Houses, lines of houses, streets, miles of pavements, piledup bricks, stones. Changing hands. This owner, that. Landlord neer dies they say. Other steps into his shoes when he gets his notice to quit. They buy the place up with gold and still they have all the gold. Swindle in it somewhere. Piled up in cities, worn away age after age. Pyramids in sand. Built on bread and onions. Slaves Chinese wall. Babylon. Big stones left. Round towers. Rest rubble, sprawling suburbs, jerry-built, Kerwan's mushroom houses, built of breeze. Shelter for the night. No one is anything." (Joyce, 2010, p.146)

Bloom honestly proves ideologies are temporary while human existence and experience is continuous. His worldview subverts the repressive ideologies and 'myths' and makes him the man necessary for the future of Ireland.

### 3. Molly: A subversive Penelope

Molly, based on Homeric Penelope, is the final subversive main character in *Ulysses*. Unlike Stephen and Bloom through whom Joyce subverts political and religious issues, with Molly as a subverted Penelope he deals with 'myths' that build gender roles and the institution of marriage around patriarchal metanarratives in the Irish society. Her marriage with Bloom, their upside-down husband and wife relationship, the exchanged gender roles that shape this relationship create a modern Odysseus and Penelope couple.

As it is obvious, Penelope is famous for her repetition as the faithful wife in western culture. The myth of the virtuous, patient and loyal wife is structured around her so much so that she becomes the female counterpart of her subtle husband Odysseus and plays various tricks during her twenty-year long waiting for the return him. As the husband struggling to find a way back home and as the wife who patiently waits for him, Odysseus and Penelope have great place in the patriarchal western tradition. They are stereotypes who belong to a world where man are defined with their masculine characteristics and deeds in an active way while women are associated with domestic duties in a passive way.

However, in Bloom and Molly's marriage, Joyce challenges the gender 'myths'. Molly is in bed at the beginning of the day when Bloom is engaged with domestic chores. Throughout his day, Molly's order of a lotion keeps his mind busy while he at the same time tries to avoid the thought about the approaching appointment of Molly and Blazes Boylan. He keeps his silence about Molly's adultery, which seems rather ridiculous for a husband of patriarchal culture. Not only he keeps silent, but also justifies his wife for Molly lacks a sexual life since Rudy's death. Unlike Odysseus, he never demands loyalty but he just "ask[s] no questions and [he'll] hear no lies" (Joyce, 2010, p.238).

Bloom's passivity stands in direct opposition to Odysseus' masculinity. However, "Bloom is as effective with words as Ulysses with a spear" (Watts, 2010, p. xxiv). That is to say, he is a different man characterized more with a kind, gentle, emotional and empathetic character. Brian Arkins compares him to Odysseus as follows:

"Leopold Bloom is very different from Odysseus: he is not a king, but a canvasser for advertisements; he is a non-practising Jew rather than a pious Greek; he is not assisted by the gods and does not hear Tiresias prophesying his Return; he has unconsummated sexual encounters with mortal women rather than consummated sexual encounters with immortal women; he is not crafty, and he is passive in the face of his wife's adultery with Boylan, the Suitor, whose pervasive presence in Ulysses corresponds to that of the Suitors in the Odyssey." (1999, p.66)

Thus Bloom subverts both the ideal hero's character and the gender roles attributed to him within the institution of marriage in a paradoxical way. Moreover, unlike the godly descriptions of Odysseus' body, Bloom's body and his daily routines related to it are pictured again in a grotesque way. He is described while reading a newspaper in the toilet at the moment "he allowed his bowels to ease themselves quietly as he read" and "seated calm above his own rising smell" (Joyce, 2010, p.61). Or, he urinates together with Stephen on the street in the middle of the night (Joyce, 2010, p.607). Or, he does not hide his thoughts when speculating on "How many women in Dublin have it today? ... why don't all women menstruate at the same time with same moon, I mean? Depends on the time they were born, I suppose. Or all start scratch then get out of step. Sometimes Molly and Milly together" (Joyce, 2010, p.333). On the beach, Bloom masturbates and experiences an orgasm watching Gerty MacDowell (Joyce, 2010, pp.330-331).

Molly's privacy is similarly disturbed by Joyce with the aim of subverting the ideal Penelope stereotype. She is paradoxically identified as "the chaste spouse of Leopold: Marion of the bountiful bosoms" (Joyce, 2010, p.288) while her thoughts tell the opposite. She is frank in telling her previous experiences with men other than Bloom or reveals facts about childbirth and comments on the masculine body with a similar honesty which seems unthinkable for a character like Penelope:

"the same in case of twins theyre supposed to represent beauty placed up there like those statues in the museum one of them pretending to hide it with her hand are they so beautiful of course compared with what a man looks like with his two bags full and his other thing hanging down out of him or sticking up at you like a hatrack no wonder they hid it with a cabbageleaf the woman is beauty of course." (Joyce, 2010, p.654)

A woman who is capable of such comments is a woman of flesh and blood but not elevated to a sublime existence as Penelope. That is why she finally decides to answer the demands of her body after eleven years without a sexual life and makes a plan to have a sexual affair with Boylan, a thought that never passed from the mind of Penelope during twenty long years who "has schooled her heart to patience, though her eyes are never free from tears as the slow nights and days pass sorrowfully by" (Homer, 1991, p.164). With this decision that is put into practice in the afternoon, Molly stains her marriage bed that again stands in contrast to Penelope's bed which is built around an olive tree symbolizing eternity and which finally becomes a test for Odysseus to prove his true identity. The symbolical staining of the bed turns into physical with Molly's unexpected menstruation blood, another grotesque detail that gives her a relief because she now knows "anyhow he didn't make [her] pregnant" (Joyce, 2010, p.670).

In addition to what has been mentioned so far, Molly is never silent and passive about being a woman. She speculates on the facts of being a woman within a patriarchal society "in which the authority of

patriarchy is destabilised and subverted” (Downes, 2006, p.156). She criticizes the men and their foolish behaviour as follows: “they always want to see a stain on the bed to know you're a virgin for them all that's troubling them they're such fools too you could be a widow or divorced 40 times over a daub of red ink would do or blackberry juice no that's too purpley.” (Joyce, 2010, p.670). She fantasizes about telling her afternoon to Bloom:

“Ill let him know if thats what he wanted that his wife is fucked yes and damn well fucked too up to my neck nearly not by him 5 or 6 times hand running theres the mark of his spunk on the clean sheet I wouldnt bother to even iron it out that ought to satisfy him if you don't believe me feel my belly unless I made him stand there and put him into me Ive a mind to tell him every scrap and make him do it out in front of me serve him right its all his own fault if I am an adulteress.” (Joyce, 2010, p.680)

She is critical about marriage because men “don't know what it is to be a woman and a mother” (Joyce, 2010, p.678). However, the patriarchal world has the power always to decide for the women. At the final part of her thoughts just before falling asleep, she decides to continue her marriage with Bloom. In parallel with Molly, Bloom thinks on alternative solutions: “assassination, never, as two wrongs did not make one right. Duel by combat, no. Divorce, not now” (Joyce, 2010, p.636). He feels no jealousy, even develops an understanding and does not create a bloody scene like Odysseus killing all the suitors but he chooses life with his free will one more time by ignoring Molly's adultery. Thus, the couple act in a highly different way when compared to any couple shaped according to the gender roles, stereotypes and rules of a patriarchal society. Turning back to Molly, she is probably forgiven by Bloom for she has an identity and courage to question the place of a woman within patriarchy or simply because he believes in negotiation in any case. After all, Molly is a real woman of flesh rather than an idealization, with good and bad, rights and wrongs.

### Conclusion

It seems that, when Joyce published *Ulysses*, this revolutionary work immediately became a piece of literature towards which no one could stand still. Certainly, it was such an innovative and provocative text that it was hard to ignore it. Moreover, its publication process created an uproar which turned it into something much more attractive than it had originally been. T.S. Eliot was one of those critics who were somehow under the influence of this almost magical work, only he was for the positive. Namely, he even answered the negative comments on the work on behalf of Joyce himself. He was fascinated at the same time for he had discovered the perfect example of what he called ‘the mythical method’. Taking the original Homeric story as the pillars of his plot, Joyce was writing a modern day *Odyssey*. The text was full of references to this western epic, not only with the plot but also with the characters, which for Eliot guaranteed a place for Joyce among the modern writers while putting him and his work into what he called ‘tradition’.

However, reading Joyce's *Ulysses* a century later, a new perspective may be employed. Through this new perspective which is equipped with the knowledge and methods of postmodernism and with the help of a more careful reading of Joyce's views on certain issues, one may argue that T.S. Eliot was wrong in his interpretation of the work. Rather than a literary work whose writer seeks immortality under the shelter of myth, *Ulysses* is a highly subversive text that rebels the myths of the authorities that create repression over Ireland and has the purpose of detroying the metanarratives structured by those myths. With this aim in mind, although he makes use of the basic storyline of *The Odyssey* in his work, Joyce turns it upside down with the help of parodies since this great epic of western civilization is imposed on the Irish culture by the colonizer British culture. In addition, he creates a subversive

Telemachus and a subversive Odysseus in the characters of Stephen and Bloom through whom he criticizes religious and political metanarratives while Molly is a subversive Penelope who brings criticism on the gender issues, marriage and patriarchy together with her husband Bloom again. Concerning the fact that although he left the country in disappointment, Joyce was always worried about the future of his homeland, this subversive approach becomes more meaningful. That is to say, he aims to destroy all the obstacles in front of any development opportunity for Ireland. He offers the 'new man' in the character of Bloom, whom, according to Joyce, Ireland needs most for he is a man of peace and negotiation. Eventually, it is possible to claim that Joyce was not only a step but a few steps ahead of his time with his postmodern content and purpose besides his original style in *Ulysses*, which is the great national epic Joyce wrote for Ireland.

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