

JAMES JOYCE AND THE CONDITION OF MODERN MAN: HUNGER, FOOD AND EATING REVEALING SELF-IDENTITY AND INTER-HUMAN RELATIONSHIP IN *LESTRYGONIANS*

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ABSTRACT: In literary history, food and eating are central themes to the work of certain writers; to others, they are metaphors or motifs associated with some other larger themes. Among those of the latter writing perspective is James Joyce, in whose fiction food and its consumption receive a complex and subtle significance. Joyce's work being itself extremely complex and with multiple connotations, this study focuses just on one section of his work, namely on the episode known as the 'Lestrygonians' from the novel *Ulysses*. Actually, Joyce's preoccupation with food in this section is so obvious that one might consider it to be this episode's central theme. It may be so, but it is also true, as we attempt to argue, that Joyce makes connections between food and both the private and the public aspects of the character's life in order to embrace again a wide range of issues, central to his entire work, including the questions of self-identity, individual frustration and alienation, family, love, sexuality, social status and behaviour, nationalism and religion. To reveal the literary significance of food and the ways in which Joyce employs food, hunger and eating as a means of engaging with these issues represents the main aim of the present study.

Keywords: food, hunger, Joyce, stream of consciousness novel, 'Lestrygonians', interior monologue, character, frustration, alienation.

ÖZET: Yazın tarihinde “yemek” ve “yemek edimi” kimi yazarların yapıtlarında ana temayı oluştururken, James Joyce gibi kimilerinininkilerde farklı temalarla ilgili eğretilen ya da motif olarak kullanılırlar. Joyce'un kurgusunda yemek ve yemek tüketimi karmaşık ve ilk anda anlaşılır olmayan bir önem kazanır. Zaten karmaşık olan Joyce'un yapıtı, yemek ve simgeleriyle sayesinde birden, oldukça yan anlam taşıyan yapıt haline gelir. Bu çalışma, *Ulysses* romanında “Lestrygonians” diye bilinen bölümle sınırlanmıştır. Aslında, Joyce'un bu bölümde yemeğe odaklanması o kadar belirgindir ki, bu bölümün ana izleğinin yemek olduğu rahatlıkla söylenebilir. Joyce, yemeğin karakterin özel ve genel yönleriyle birleştirerek, yapıtında kendini sorgulama, bireysel hüsrana, yabancılaşma, aile, aşk, cinsellik, sosyal konum ve tutum, milliyetçilik ve din gibi konuları ele alır. Bu çalışmanın esas amacı, yemeğin ve Joyce'un yemek, açlık gibi konuları ele almasının yazınsal önemini ortaya koymaktır..

Anahtar Kelimeler: yemek, açlık, Joyce, bilinç akışı romanı, “Lestrygonians”, iç monolog, karakter, hüsrana, yabancılaşma.

I. Introduction: Food as a Literary Concern

From ancient period all the way throughout centuries until nowadays it is easy to notice how every now and then writers refer in their works and in different ways to eating and drinking. The food has become the object of a discourse, or, in fact, the object of “a multitude of discourses: stage plays, religious polemics, mystical tracts, cookbooks, medical texts, herbals, travelogues, novels, to name a few of the genres; primitivist legend, humoral physiology, Christian asceticism, utopian speculation, to name a few of the intellectual traditions or “discursive formations” entailed, as Michel Foucault once characterized them” (Appelbaum, 2006: xiii).

Among the multiple reasons for such a thematic concern, stands the idea that food is a means of revealing the personality of a character, his/her self and social identity: “formative feeding experiences are inscribed in the

psyche; food and eating are essential to self-identity and are instrumental in the definition of family, class, ethnicity". (Sceats, 2000: 9) This is especially the case of the individual-concerned twentieth-century and contemporary literature. Like in Europe in general, in that particular type of British literary art which is labelled 'experimental' and 'innovative' a major emphasis is on personal, in particular psychological, experience, and, among the many aspects of the human experience employed to better reveal the psychological issues, the private consciousness and sensibility, stands the experience of hunger, food and eating as "the primary source of pleasure and frustration". (Sceats, 2000: 9)

In addition to this, given its both private and public aspects, the practice of food consumption is "inextricably connected with social function. What people eat, how and with whom, what they feel about food and why – even who they eat – are of crucial significance to an understanding of human society". (Sceats, 2000: 9) The food consumption is thus thematically employed to reveal also various social topics, the inter-human relationship and the relationship between the individual experience and the larger domain of family, national, cultural, religious, political and other issues.

II. James Joyce, Modernism, and the Stream of Consciousness Novel

Among the twentieth-century British writers who made food a part of their discourse aiming at revealing both self-identity and social meanings is James Joyce, a major representative of Modernism. Joyce made use of his aesthetic concentration to achieve literary innovation by exploring new fields of human experience and by developing new means of artistic expression.

A writer is considered to be a proper representative of Modernism and is regarded as innovative and experimental if he/she is capable to merge in one work the innovation on both thematic and structural levels. A true exponent of the modernist experimental novel, Joyce expresses new thematic perspectives by using new methods, which are, in his case, the theme of the psychological experience of the individual expressed in the form of interior monologue by the stream of consciousness technique, as in his masterpiece *Ulysses*.

Another author would be Virginia Woolf, who, in *Mrs Dalloway*, renders new thematic concerns by the same original narrative technique, unlike Lawrence or Huxley, for instance, who achieve experimentation only on one level. Hence the fact that Joyce and Woolf in fiction and Eliot in poetry have been constantly to the present day regarded as modernists, whereas Lawrence, who provided innovation reflecting the psychoanalytical issues merely on the thematic level, remaining a traditionalist in the narrative organization of his novels, is regarded as a modernist only in the context of his own period.

The interest of the modernist writer from the first half of the twentieth-century in original themes and techniques was stimulated by the new developments, contemporary or from the nineteenth-century, in the field of ideas, in particular in philosophy, psychology, and anthropology, and in the field of art, in particular by the second half of the nineteenth-century Symbolism, Impressionism, and Aestheticism. Breaking with the past, the new philosophical, psychological and artistic theories stimulated the interest in discovering new means to show the fact that the human perception of the actual phenomena is not reliable, which, among other things, questions the traditional concept of human self-control and self-responsibility, and recognises the imperfectability of man. In the discourse of imaginative prose this perspective determines important changes in the character representation strategies, where the individual is no longer regarded as a master of his destiny, a fully integrated personality, but a psychologically unstable human being whose feelings and thoughts are uncertain, impressions unreliable and responses unpredictable.

Borrowing from psychology (*Principles of Psychology* (1890) by William James) the idea that reality is not objectively given but it is perceived subjectively through consciousness, Joyce, Woolf, Proust, and Faulkner

attempted to render the entire complexity of the individual psychological experience and produced the stream of consciousness novel (the term ‘stream of consciousness’ being first coined by James to describe the flow of thoughts within the awakened mind) as a particular type of the modernist experimental fiction. The mental experience is not an entirely new concern in literature, but Joyce and others provided it with the status of the ultimate thematic concern, where the intimate and infinite processes of thought and the relationship between consciousness, subconscious and reality become the subject matter of the fictional text.

Moreover, as Joyce conceived of it, the individual psychological experience is a framework or context consisting of abstract manifestations of the mind – ideas, thoughts, sensations, memories, impressions, intuitions, feelings, etc. – which are in fact the actual subject matter of the novel. In his attempt to reify in the written discourse the processes which make these abstract manifestations possible, the writer remains on the unspoken, abstract, mental level and for this purpose he searches for new methods to describe the unspoken thoughts and feelings of the character since the traditional narrative organization, the objective description, and the conventional dialogue are inappropriate.

The stream of consciousness has proved to be the most important method of expression of such a literary concern, since it renders faithfully the psychological context and synchronises the originality of theme with that of technique. Joyce uses the stream of consciousness technique as the way in which the text is to be written, and it might be said that the stream of consciousness also refers rather to the subject-matter than to the technique. The abstract manifestations of the mind emerge as prompted by personal unconscious and/or from the interaction with the actual reality. They also emerge and are linked to form the infinite process of thinking by the psychological principle of free-association, meaning the power of one thing to suggest another. Finally, when the stream of consciousness method is applied, they receive the form of a particular type of literary discourse, which is called ‘interior monologue’.

To conclude this somewhat long but necessary introductory part, the stream of consciousness technique constructs the interior monologue which renders the psychological context and processes of character just as they really exist on different levels of consciousness and conscious control before ideas and other abstract manifestations of the mind are organized and formulated for deliberate speech or materialised in external behaviour.

III. The Condition of Modern Man and the Character Representation Strategies in *Ulysses*

The novel *Ulysses* offers through the form of interior monologue and the stream of consciousness technique “the richest exhibition of psychological realism to be found in this period”. (Baldick, 2005: 208) The text of *Ulysses* is primarily an interior monologue; or rather it comprises three distinct interior monologues, since the story focuses on three characters, namely Stephen Dedalus, Leopold Bloom and Molly Bloom.

In the framework of these interior monologues, the sense of hunger and the idea of food occur amid the numerous other abstract manifestations of the mind, which, in the general psychological context of each character, emerge and succeed each other as a flux of thinking, indeed a stream of consciousness. Certainly, the most recurrent abstract manifestations of the characters do not refer to food: the majority of their thoughts and memories are so rendered as to disclose the main aspects that form the thematic nucleus of all Joyce’s writings – art, literature, language, nationhood, religion, family – and to reflect the contemporary period of chaos, state of confusion, and existential crisis on different levels. Among these levels – social, religious, political, and others – of primary importance stands the individual experience reflecting two main aspects of the condition of modern man: frustration (on personal level) and alienation (as a social being).

Out of the eighteenth sections of the novel, the only one that explicitly deals with food is the chapter called *Lestrygonians*, in which, “tasting his hunger, he [Bloom] laces the landscape with images of food, the giving of

which only famishes the craving.” (Sherry, 2004: 69) The section represents the fifth part of Bloom’s interior monologue and the eighth of the whole novel. Since the novel contains eighteen parts like Homer’s epic, it is a critical cliché to consider *Ulysses* a modern epic based on Homer’s *Odyssey*, in that “underneath each of the eighteen extended episodes around which the novel is built lies a Homeric precedent.” (Sanders, 2004: 540) Following Joyce’s stated intention to transpose the ancient myth *sub specie temporis nostri*, each section of the novel finds its counterpart in Homer; also, the protagonists Leopold Bloom is a modern Ulysses/Odysseus, Stephen Dedalus is Telemachus, and Molly Bloom is Penelope. The literal aspect of the transposed myth contains a rather ‘thin thread’ of action – “Stephen’s estrangement from Mulligan, Molly Bloom’s infidelity, the meeting of Bloom and Stephen, their return to the Blooms’ house and eventual parting” – “but sufficient for a new odyssey in which most of the adventures occur inside the mind”. (Ellmann, 1986: xii-xiii)

The novel’s intertextual perspectives are numerous and diverse; only in *Lestrygonians* one finds references to, among others, *Hamlet* by Shakespeare and *Ulysses* by Tennyson, where, concerning the latter, “the mock heroic prose is applied to Bloom who does not drink life to the lees as Tennyson has it but ‘drain [s] his glass to the lees’”. (Pierce, 2006: 56) In addition, the novel is thematically connected to Joyce’s previous works *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Stephen Hero*, but here a troubled Stephen is no longer the main character: the central part of the novel, containing twelve episodes, is given to Leopold, while the first three sections to Stephen and the last three to Molly.

It is also an already established critical tradition to compare the characters and to claim that they represent hypostases of the modern frustrated and alienated personality in a period of crisis in the history of humanity, of which the one that is the textual representation of Joyce is Stephen Dedalus, whereas Leopold Bloom and Molly Bloom are linked to the general human condition. A more detailed comparative approach is dedicated to the two male characters, Stephen and Leopold.

Concerning the similarities, the emphasis is on the characteristic to both feeling of alienation and frustration in public and private life. Throughout the day, 16 June 1904, they search for understanding, communication and companionship, experience epiphanies, finally meet one another and discover a sense of intimacy suggesting prospect of fulfilment, sense of reconciliation, hope for artistic accomplishment, and the eventual escape from the tormenting feelings of frustration and alienation.

Concerning the differences, the emphasis is on the opposition between the spiritual (Stephen) and the materialistic (Leopold). Both similarities and differences between Dedalus and Bloom emerge better from within the contexts of their interior monologues. In both, the reader finds the common concerns with (1) private life (namely family issues: in Stephen death of mother and in Leopold death of his son Rudolph and the infidelity of Molly, which become obsessions revealing, or rather being, the source of their frustration), (2) public life (issues concerning politics and Irish Nationalism), and (3) spiritual life (issues related to religion), the last two revealing alienation of the characters.

However, Stephen’s interior monologue consists of multiple allusions to philosophy, literature, religion, history, social theories, and myth, disclosing a highly artistic nature of an intellectual concerned with spiritual issues. Stephen is the philosopher, abstract thinker, spiritual, intellectual, and learned, and his interior monologue is complex and reflects a diversity of interests and fields of knowledge. Hence also the very small amount of author’s intervention in the form of third person narration or traditional dialogue. On the contrary, Bloom’s interior monologue points to a more pragmatic, materialistic, less intellectual and sophisticated personality of an ordinary man with no special complexity of thought, inefficient and obsessed with his inefficiency and inferiority, and revealing, like Stephen, the sense of alienation and frustration.

Leopold is the ordinary citizen, modern urban man, material and practical, “the common man who imagines he has a practical, scientific cast of mind reflecting on things” (Pierce, 2006: 18) and who apprehends the objects “by all of the senses as well as the intellect – but mostly by the senses.” (Sharkey, 2006: 242) His interior monologue is less complicated, hence the author’s frequent intervention with the third person narration and the use of dialogue, in particular regarding characterisation. Each character’s interior monologue is divided in sections of the novel; each section is related to the rest, contributing to the expression of the general themes and ideas, but each has also its own setting and mode of narration, its own reference to a single hour, organ, art, colour, symbol, and technique, and, above all, its own thematic and structural unity.

IV. The Modernist Representation of Hunger, Food and Eating in *Lestrygonians*

The human being requires food to survive as individual and sexual encounter to survive as race, and it seems that *Lestrygonians* argues about this by its focus on sexuality coming next to food. The main emphasis is on hunger, food and eating, the real experience of eating as a fundamental activity, connected to “the real experience of hunger and desire, of pleasure and discomfort, of self-regulation and self-indulgence, of joy and guilt”. (Appelbaum, 2006: xiii) It is in this episode that Joyce draws the close connection between food consumption and personal identity.

By its concern with food as the most basic materialistic need to survive and be happy, the episode reveals the materialistic, worldly-minded and practical features of Leopold’s personality. According to the schema for *Ulysses*, the scene of the episode is ‘the lunch’, hour is ‘1 pm’, organ is ‘oesophagus’, art is ‘architecture’, and so on.

Leopold Bloom, a mediocre canvasser for advertisements, is placed on the streets of Dublin at lunchtime, in no great hurry, heading towards the National Library, and in meantime considering eating at Burton’s restaurant. Walking through the streets, “Bloom bathes in a spate of images, sounds, and odors triggering memories recent and distant and a profusion of thoughts. His mind races back and forth among all of these, exulting in their multifarious abundance, accepting the desires they arouse” (Alter, 2005: 164), above all the sense of hunger and sexual desire.

At the beginning rather weak but rapidly growing in intensity, Bloom’s hunger comes gradually to prevail over all other feelings, interferes with other thoughts, in particular his sexual and sensual imagination, and throughout the entire interior monologue represents the main stimulus for all his other abstract manifestations of the mind. In other words, Leopold’s diverse thoughts – about Molly, their dead son, work, Irish national issues, religion, literature, etc. – based on the principle of free-association and stimulated by his sense of hunger, would gradually be systematized to rotate around the idea of food and eating reaching its paramount dominance over his consciousness at the moment of entering the Burton’s restaurant. Prior to this moment, Bloom recognizes his bodily need: “Ah, I’m hungry”. Leading to this understanding is a complex experience of the mind “hopping among remembered sights and sounds, commonplace sayings, and immediate sensations” (Baldick, 2005: 209). Also,

as Bloom wanders the streets, his thoughts about people he sees, or advertising gimmicks and slogans that he reads or recalls, constantly switch back involuntarily to food and drink, until he becomes aware that he is hungry and needs his midday meal. Predisposed to a sort of practical utopianism, he ponders the merits and disadvantages of communal kitchens, then of vegetarianism, before rehearsing, in a sequence of broken yet loosely associated phrases, the horrors of butchery. (Baldick, 2005: 208)

Already at the very beginning of *Lestrygonians*, Leopold’s sense of hunger, bound to sensual images, reveals itself in that his first thoughts are on “pineapple rock, lemon platt, butter scotch. A sugarsticky girl shovelling scoopfuls of creams for a Christian brother.” Intermingled with the thoughts on food are those on religion, which are

stimulated by the first contact with reality from this section, when Leopold is handed a religious leaflet containing the words “Blood of the Lamb”. Leopold at first mistakes “Blood” with “Bloom”; then embarks on speculating simultaneously about religion and food in that “All are washed in the blood of the lamb”, “God wants blood victim”, etc.; and arrives to a feeling of compassion for a child that looks “underfed” and then for some gulls – “those poor birds” – and he buys two cakes for a penny to feed the birds. One may notice that Bloom’s thoughts on food and eating unveil a nice, warm-hearted personality, which is also due to the fact that his sense of hunger has not acquired its full strength yet.

Next pages show Leopold’s thinking process turning to private life, namely family issues, and here emerge the main two sources of Leopold’s sense of frustration and alienation: the death of his son and Molly committing adultery with Boylan. Leopold discloses it on the mental level in his interior monologue (“If he ... O! Eh? No ... No. No, no. I don’t believe it. He wouldn’t surely? No, no”), and also by the help of the narrator (“Mr Bloom moved forward raising his troubled eyes”), and then again in the framework of his psychological experience (“Think no more about that”). Bloom attempts to escape the disturbing reflections by rapidly changing the turn of thought and by contrasting the happy family life from the past (“Happy. Happy. That was the night”) with the unhappy present that began after the death of their son. Leopold’s interior monologue is interrupted by the meeting of an acquaintance, Mrs. Breen, actually an old sweetheart of Leopold’s, and their dialogue.

Following this intrusion of a traditional type of narrative organization, Bloom’s interior monologue continues with references to the newspaper *Irish Times*, stimulating abstract manifestations on his job and later on nationalism, namely Irish national issues, denoting a new turn of his thought which signifies the shift in the thematic perspectives of the novel from the private existence to public life and politics. The thoughts on the issues of Irish nationalism intermingle with those on newspaper, work, literature, urban life, and more and more with references to food and eating.

Approaching the restaurant, Bloom’s anxiety reaches its culmination as his sense of hunger is also at peak, dominates the consciousness and disturbs the discursive logic of thinking (“Duke street. Here we are. Must eat. The Burton. Feel better then”), and excludes all other abstract manifestations of the mind except for the sexual images borrowed from a novel: “Perfumed bodies, warm, full. All kissed, yielded: in deep summer fields, tangled pressed grass, in trickling hallways of tenements, along sofas, creaking beds. – Jack, love! – Darling! – Kiss me, Reggy! – My boy! – Love!”. Compositionally, the interior monologue here, as in much of the novel, and as registered by stream of consciousness, shows discontinuity and fragmentation, meaning “an energetic cutting back and forth between swathes of disparate linguistic materials that are assembled in a complex, aesthetically satisfying narrative whole”, since Joyce “embraces the fragmentation” and “the fragments in his treatment of them become a new kind of poetry that affirms simultaneously the inventive energies of the mind and the concrete particularities of everyday experience”. (Alter, 2005: 162)

The moment of Bloom entering the restaurant, with his psychological condition being solely under the stimuli of hunger and sensual desire chaotically interfusing one with another, represents the climax of the section. Leopold’s “heart astir”, he “pushed in the door of the Burton restaurant”, and, continues the narrator, “Stink gripped his trembling breath.” Here the narrator’s intervention ends, and the reader views the whole picture through Leopold’s eyes, the scene being reflected mainly as a flux of abstract manifestations in the form of interior monologue:

See the animals feed.

Men, men, men.

Perched on high stools by the bar, hats shoved back, at the tables calling for more bread no charge, swilling, wolfing gobfuls of sloppy food, their eyes bulging, wiping wetted moustaches. A pallid suetfaced young man polished his tumbler knife fork and spoon with his napkin. New set of microbes. A man with an infant’s saucestained napkin tucked round him shovelled gurgling soup down his gullet. A

man spitting back on his plate: halfmasticated gristle: gums: no teeth to chewchewchew it. Chump chop from the grill. Bolting to get it over. Sad booser's eyes. Bitten off more than he can chew. Am I like that? See ourselves as others see us. Hungry man is an angry man. Working tooth and jaw. Don't! O! A bone! That last pagan king of Ireland Cormac in the schoolpoem choked himself at Sletty southward of the Boyne. Wonder what he was eating. Something galoptious. Saint Patrick converted him to Christianity. Couldn't swallow it all however.

– Roast beef and cabbage.

– One stew.

Smells of men. Spaton sawdust, sweetish warmish cigarettesmoke, reek of plug, spilt beer, men's beery piss, the stale of ferment. His gorge rose.

Couldn't eat a morsel here.

The scene at Burton's restaurant containing the consumption of food is materialised in the discourse of the text as a distinct process in the psychological experience of Bloom and the atmosphere created this way is presented as unpleasant, uncivilised and disgusting, a real image of cannibalistic consumption. This moment in the character's psychological experience is highly revelatory for the true comprehension of his personality: people are viewed as animals, 'Lestrygonians', that is, cannibals; his first thought – "see the animals feed" – reveals that Bloom is disgusted by the atmosphere and by the people eating there, since his stomach is brought to the point of vomit.

Cannibalism means savagery and inhuman cruelty, and the scene propagates an archetypal image of cannibalism and "the connotations of 'cannibalism' imply a cultural archetype, conjuring up irredeemably savage, most primitive and distant tribes, or the pathological disintegration of personality and social order". (Sceats, 2000: 41) Also, since it is not rendered as the literal eating of human flesh, cannibalism is employed here metaphorically, as a "figurative cannibalism", meaning "the use of cannibalistic desire or behaviour as a metaphor." (Sceats, 2000: 42) Another interesting interpretation of this central episode of *Lestrygonians* is given by Vincent Sherry: the scene at the restaurant represents

a recasting of the original Homeric adventure, in Book X, where Odysseus' men meet the cannibals. Bloom, turning into Burton's restaurant, enters an equally savage prospect (8.650ff.), where the forbidden practices of Homer's tribe are centered in the consumption of meat: "pungent meatjuice" (651) registers a shock in Bloom's first, lasting, intensifying impression. Carnivorism is hardly cannibalism, however, and the logic of the Bloomian overreaction is given in the litany he chants over this prospect. "Men, men, men" (8.653): where redblooded men (used to) eat meat, the supplanting of Bloom's own virility by Boylan causes him to bestialize this scene of flesh-eaters. (Sherry, 2004: 70)

Thinking like a human hater, Bloom reveals a particular attitude towards men, and the phrase 'hungry man is an angry man' referring to the people in the restaurant may easily be ascribed to render Bloom as being himself angry, which is to be angry at human condition in general. Hunger is a need, but here the "awareness of hunger is often associated with pain, desperation, and aggression". (Appelbaum, 2006: 248) Disgusted by the atmosphere, Bloom "couldn't eat a morsel here". He leaves the restaurant, comes "out into clearer air", is back on the streets of Dublin, actually turning "back towards Grafton street", and, with his still strong sense of hunger and anger ("Eat or be eaten. Kill! Kill!" and "Ah, I'm hungry"), Bloom goes to another restaurant.

This second eating place is Davy Byrne's "moral pub", where he has a cheese sandwich and a glass of burgundy. It is interesting to notice that before this actual eating Bloom has expressed fondness of animal meat and ridiculed the vegetarian food, but, after the experience at Burton's restaurant, he cannot eat meat and asks for "mighty cheese", a Gorgonzola sandwich: the cheese "is neither vegetable nor meat, yet it is alive: it is formed from mammal's milk without slaughter, and enclosed in bread which is vegetable in origin but reconstructed by man." (Ellmann, 1986: 78)

After consuming the food, it seems that ‘full man is a happy man’, and Bloom feels much better in terms of psychological condition, peace returns to his mind, the world around is quiet and nice, “nice quiet bar. Nice piece of wood in that counter. Nicely planed.” Presumably, Bloom contemplates and apprehends beauty in a framework of an aesthetic which is primarily sensual, a parody on Stephen’s aesthetic theory: “If Stephen is right, Bloom must also advance along “the stages themselves of all esthetic apprehension.” These, we recall, Stephen has borrowed from Aquinas and then modified: *integritas*, *consonantia*, and *quidditas*. Stephen says, “Find these and you find the qualities of universal beauty” (P, 211).” (Sharkey, 2006: 240) As if proving again the connection of food with sex, and that eating may supplant for the lack of affection, memories of the happy past with Molly emerge into Bloom’s mind, and he recollects his wife “fondling him in her lap”, remembers their courtship, love, games, and kisses. Influenced by the “glowing wine on his palate” and with the sense of hunger now vanished, Bloom remembers the once strong sexual attraction between them, and his sexual appetite which arises through memory has “the same fastidiousness or vulgarity as the stomachic one” (Ellmann, 1986: 79):

O wonder! Coolsoft with ointments her hand touched me, caressed: her eyes upon me did not turn away. Ravished over her I lay, full lips full open, kissed her mouth. Yum. Softly she gave me in my mouth the seedcake warm and chewed. Mawkish pulp her mouth had mumbled sweetsour of her spittle. Joy: I ate it: joy. Young life, her lips that gave me pouting. Soft warm sticky gumjelly lips. Flowers her eyes were, take me, willing eyes. (...) Screened under ferns she laughed warmfolded. Wildly I lay on her, kissed her: eyes, her lips, her stretched neck beating, woman's breasts full in her blouse of nun's veiling, fat nipples upright. Hot I tongued her. She kissed me. I was kissed. All yielding she tossed my hair. Kissed, she kissed me.

Bloom’s reverie of Molly first yielding to him on Howth Hill, stimulated by something extremely trivial and valueless, namely by watching two flies mate on a window, is an “aesthetic reverie” which reveals Bloom being on the sensual side of human experience, since he “apprehends beauty” primarily through senses – taste, hearing, sight, tactile sensations – and his “aesthetic is a sensual immersion in the world”. (Sharkey, 2006: 239)

The recollection of the happy young love shows again that the episode “is generated mostly out of two different attitudes towards food and sexuality.” (Ellmann, 1986: 74) Such memories of a happy past represent a recurrent motif in the novel; they offer to Bloom “another weapon against the Lestrygonians, whichever food they devour, and that is memory” (Ellmann, 1986: 78); they make Bloom “realize how much less happy he is today than he was once” (Sharkey, 2006: 239); at the same time, they have another meaning: “Bloom, at once Ulysses and the Wandering Jew, longs to return from exile to the land flowing with milk and honey which is also Ithaca and faithful Penelope.” (Alter, 2005: 163) The memories are an attempt to escape the problematic present, to reassert passion and erotic appetite, and they imply that *Ulysses* “is not a novel about desire fulfilled but about the healthiness of desire constantly reasserting itself, despite all frustrating experience, as a stubborn attachment to life.” (Alter, 2005: 163-164)

For the second time in the section, Joyce interrupts the character’s interior monologue by a dialogue, this time between Davy Byrne and Nosey Flynn, about Leopold, in which he is called a “decent quiet man” but also regarded as being “in trouble” and “in mourning”. The dialogue represents a traditional type of characterisation by which the reader learns about the character from outside and the meaning acquired this way might coincide or be different from what the reader learns about the character in the context of self-characterisation offered by the interior monologue.

At the beginning Bloom has behaved and thought as a decent man, but the sense of hunger and the frustration at Molly’s adultery stimulated abstract manifestations showing a human-hater, disgusted by the human-cannibals. After consuming the food and his sense of hunger being suppressed, Bloom shows himself again to be a decent and nice man, as it was stated in the dialogue and as it is now revealed by his thoughts and behaviour.

Bloom leaves the restaurant and, walking towards the National Library, remembers Molly and Boylan, but drives away the disturbing thoughts (“Today. Today. Not think”) in an attempt to preserve his present condition of “feel better”. Bloom reveals his decency by trying to help a blind boy to cross the street, expresses much sympathy towards him, but, to a certain extent, his compassionate behaviour may seem exaggerated as the “blind stripling” does not express a clear wish to be helped. “Wants to cross”, thinks Bloom about the boy; “Do you want to cross?” asks Bloom; receiving no answer, Bloom insists: “You’re in Dawson street”, “Molesworth street is opposite”, “Do you want to cross? There’s nothing in the way”, etc. After helping the boy, Bloom continues to think about him and comes to identify himself with the blind person and even to express anger at the cruel destiny: “Poor fellow! Quite a boy. Terrible. Really terrible. What dreams would he have, not seeing? Life a dream for him. Where is the justice being born that way?”

Leopold Bloom’s flux of abstract manifestations of the mind revealing his apparently nice and compassionate personality is interrupted when, almost approaching the library, he catches a glimpse of Boylan on the street. Marked by this contact with reality, Bloom’s psychological *status quo* is disturbed and his consciousness is again overcome by the sense of frustration and alienation. Resembling the moment of entering Burton’s restaurant, here his thoughts also emerge chaotically and disorganized, as he is anxious to avoid seeing Boylan:

Straw hat in sunlight. Tan shoes. Turnedup trousers. It is. It is. His heart quopped softly. To the right. Museum. Goddesses. He swerved to the right. Is it? Almost certain. Won’t look. Wine in my face. Why did I? Too heady. Yes, it is. The walk. Not see. Get on. Making for the museum gate with long windy steps he lifted his eyes. Handsome building. Sir Thomas Deane designed. Not following me? Didn’t see me perhaps. Light in his eyes.

Such a psychological state is typical of the frustrated personality of a man with inferiority complex induced by something or someone undesirable. This is exteriorised by Bloom pretending to admire the architecture and searching anxiously in his pockets, where he finds a leaflet, a potato, and a cake of soap. It is suggested that Bloom is anxious to avoid an encounter with the Lestrygonian Boylan because he is afraid of him.

Indeed, the inferiority complex is usually provoked by someone stronger and, in his desperate attempts to avoid facing Boylan, Leopold thinks and behaves like an individual that fails and accepts the dominance of the male rival in his self-induced (since the reader is not told whether Molly and Boylan have an affair) fight for female response. The section ends with Bloom trying to leave the open space of the street and to find a safe refuge; for this, he reaches the National Library, goes through its gate and only then feels safe:

Hurry. Walk quietly. Moment more. My heart.
His hand looking for the where did I put found in his hip pocket soap lotion have to call tepid
paper stuck. Ah soap there I yes. Gate.
Safe!

Here emerges “perhaps the single most striking contrast between Homer’s Achaean hero and his modern Dubliner [which] is the conduct of each when he returns to his defiled home: Bloom will make no move against Boylan himself. He hates violence; and he knows that he was not innocently wronged by Boylan, as Odysseus was by the suitors.” (Sultan, 1990: 46) Instead of acting against his rival, Bloom seeks refuge in the museum statues, which means that he seeks “refuge in a static, history-free realm”; in other words, “because Molly is historical and achievable, adultery is possible. Thus when Bloom flees Boylan by taking refuge in the company of cold, quiet, timeless statues, he flees not just Boylan’s adulterous threat or even adultery in general, but the historical condition of human experience.” (Sharkey, 2006: 248)

V. Concluding Reflections: Hunger and Food as Means of Exposing Self and Social Identity in the Interaction of Unconscious, Consciousness and the Contacts with Immediate Reality

The episode *Lestrygonians*, like the whole novel and the entire Joyce's work, is created around the theme of the condition of modern man in the modern world searching for self-identity, social identity, and stable values in a troubled period in the history of Europe and Ireland. Apart from this, as it is clear from the section, James Joyce focuses on national problems of Ireland, religious issues, realities of family life, aspects of urban existence, and others, thus demonstrating that his visions and concerns continuously change, diversify and expand from personal to public and to universal, from Ireland to the entire world, from the condition of Leopold, Molly and Stephen to the general human existence. Concerning the character representation strategies, Joyce attempts to grasp the sense of frustration, alienation and futility that dominates the conscious level of the psyche, and the atmosphere of chaos and confusion that surrounds the individual existence. In order to achieve it, Joyce applies a combination of multiple thematic and structural perspectives in rendering the psychological experience involving the relationship between consciousness and unconscious and between consciousness and external reality.

In *Lestrygonians*, as in the novel in general and as for Stephen and Molly, the text is basically an interior monologue representing the psychological experience of Bloom, which consists of the abstract manifestations of the mind on the conscious level and whose processes are stimulated by (1) personal unconscious and (2) the contacts with reality. In other words, the character's thinking process is under the determinism of both inner and outer stimuli. It is generally accepted that the personal unconscious determines the general and permanent type and pattern of the individual consciousness and that it provides the true understanding of the character's personality. The contacts with reality, although also stimulate the unconscious, determine mostly the particular manifestations and changes in the course of the individual mental experience, and thus may give a false and misleading understanding of character's personality.

In *Lestrygonians* the most important unconscious stimulus is the sense of hunger that influences character's action but above all his thoughts and ideas focusing them on food and eating. The food is here "is a major means of self-definition, as well as an important channel for the transmission of culture", meaning that, apart from revealing self-identity, food is also a "social signifier, a bearer of interpersonal and cultural meanings." (Seats, 2000: 133) When hunger dominates the consciousness, Bloom's alienation and frustration reveal themselves as criticism on society, scepticism towards religion and national issues, but especially as hatred of people, the denial of human condition, as in the scene in the restaurant, in which the sense of hunger reaches its climax and the idea of food rules the mind. Other examples of stimuli in Bloom would be his obsession with Molly's adultery and the anxiety at the death of his son. In Stephen's case, the unconscious stimuli are also numerous, but the dominant ones are his obsession with guilt related to the death of his mother (having refused to adopt piety) and the concern with his accomplishment or non-accomplishment as an artist, which, like with Bloom, influence most of the abstract manifestations and reveal frustration and alienation as dominant features of his personality.

Also numerous are the examples of the contacts with reality (receive a leaflet, meet a friend, smell something, etc.), which represent external stimuli for the thinking activity at certain moments in the present time of the consciousness and in the present of narration, but also influence the unconscious and determine its activity, such as the revival of certain memories of the past experience in order to be juxtaposed to the present situation. In Leopold's case, getting a paper on the street stimulates immediate abstract speculations on religious issues; a newspaper influences thoughts on public life, political issues, Irish nationalism, journalism, and literature; meeting an acquaintance determines recollections of the past experience concerning family, home and private life, happy once but now unhappy.

By interrelating unconscious, consciousness and immediate reality Joyce creates a unique mode of characterisation and achieves a complex and at the same time contradictory depiction of the human mind. Each character expresses

a distinct interior monologue that corresponds to the individual ways of thinking and behaviour, showing that both the unconscious and conscious patterns of inner life are closely connected to family, nation, milieu, education, human interaction, disposition, emotional states, thus showing the distinct particular features of each individual. The interior monologue renders the mind of the character as an obscure universe, a personal world consisting of quickly changing impressions and sensations.

The interior monologue is based on the character's chaotic and simultaneous process of free association of diverse abstract manifestations related to personal experience, as well as to different mythic allusions and archetypal correspondences, suggesting the complexity of the individual psychological experience. The most important moments in the interior monologue are epiphanies, "sudden, unlooked-for turns in experience" (Ellmann, 1986: xvi), used to express the character's awareness of himself and to make him experience concentrating states of intense revelation, illumination, and deep understanding with important symbolical implications for the whole existence.

In *Lestrygonians*, the most revelatory moment is the scene in Burton's restaurant, in which hunger dominates consciousness and determines a particular attitude towards people, which is revealed solely on the mental level and which refers to cannibalism, lack of civilised manners and behaviour, animal condition. The meaning emerging from this attitude is opposed to that from the dialogue between two men about Leopold. The psychic explosion in the restaurant and the dialogue represent the opposition between what reader learns from the disclosed by stream of consciousness technique Bloom's consciousness (frustration, alienation, hatred for people) and what reader learns from the dialogue as an external source (he is a nice and compassionate person). The attitude of disgust and rejection expressed by a dominated by hunger consciousness is also opposed to the decent behaviour on the street after consuming the food: Bloom is sympathetic and sensitive when meeting a blind boy, indeed a person "sensitive amid crudity". (Ellmann, 1986: 107)

It is suggested that eating offers a sense of satisfaction, happiness and accomplishment (resulting in helping a blind person and remembering only pleasant moments of the past) which is nothing but momentary and illusionary, since hunger is an innate and basic need and emerges over and over again. Likewise, Bloom is in general a frustrated personality, alienated in society, unsuccessful professionally, unhappy in family life, unable to establish communication.

A tragic-comical figure shown as carrying out his duties as father, husband, citizen, and employee, he performs throughout the day a symbolic journey meeting a variety of people in different places. In these interactions Bloom expresses his sense of alienation in family and society, his sense of frustration induced by the death of his son and the infidelity of Molly, and, although different in matters of personality from Homer's hero, Bloom acts as a Ulysses in search of his Telemachus, expressing "the desire to be a stepfather, or more precisely a Stephen-father" (Thurston, 2004: 186), and eager to kill his wife's suitors.

The novel *Ulysses* shows Joyce's special ability to catch even the most obscure and hidden thoughts and feelings of the human being, while creating a balance between the individual experience and the social and universal experience of the human race. In steps of Dostoyevsky, the character receives the primary focus, and in doing so, Joyce attempts at authorial withdrawal and allows his characters the freedom to speak for themselves, to disclose their own mind and expose it to the apprehension of the reader who, as a spectator, "anticipates a showing, rather than a telling, of the self". (Miller, 2002: 134) The independence of self expression regards the individual consciousness and unconscious, and the literary devices which better express the individuality of the character are the form of interior monologue, the stream of consciousness technique, the moments of epiphany.

These are the facts, among many others, that make Joyce to be one of the most important twentieth-century writers and a major novelist who, by defying tradition, discovered new realms and methods of literary expression, as a

consequence determining, together with Woolf and Eliot, the disappearance of the complex of insularity of British literature and its openness to artistic originality and influences of all kind.

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