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**ARTISTIC AMALGAMATION OF EPICAL SUBJECT AND  
EXPERIMENTAL STRATEGY: ASSESSING JOYCE'S ULYSSES AS A  
PARADIGMATIC MODERNIST NARRATIVE**



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**❖ ABSTRACT**

*The plot of Joyce's Ulysses, first published in serial form in 1918-1920 and then in book form in 1922, involves three main characters Stephen Dedalus, Leopold Bloom and Molly Bloom, and revolves around ordinary incidents that take place in Dublin in one day to establish that modern literature which is an ordinary man's odyssey is interspersed with elements of fragmentation, alienation complexity, public-private interface, lack of communication etc. The Jewish ad-canvasser, Leopold Bloom, is the modern version of the Homeric Ulysses (Ulysses; in Latin). The inversion is noticeable in his characteristic similitude, submissiveness and soft-heartedness. Stephen Dedalus, a modern Telemachus, is symbolical of the artist's search for a place in the world. A modern Penelope, Molly Bloom oscillates from her reminiscences of an erotic liaison, to contemplating sensual thoughts and romantic reveries. Ulysses can be categorized as a modern epic in terms of its vastness and profundity, experimentation in matter and manner, historiographic depiction of society, and abandonment of linearity or sequential management of time or arrangement of events. The internal thoughts of the characters are read and mapped through 'Stream-of-Consciousness' strategy and interior monologue method, which cause the third person omniscient narration shift to first person for the exploration of psyche. The narration deftly uses irony, humour, satire,*

symbols, allusions, and literary and intertextual references. My paper will be an attempt to trace in *Ulysses* an artistic assortment of theme and technique which accords the text, the distinction of a masterpiece of modernist fiction.

**Keywords:** Modernist narrative, Interior Monologue, Stream-of-Consciousness, Intertextuality, Symbols, Allusions.

## ◆ INTRODUCTION

The oeuvre of James Joyce, the most renowned name in the modernist literary endeavour reveals experimental style, theme and technique. His major works include *Dubliners* (1914), *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), *Exiles* (1918), *Ulysses* (1922), *Finnegans Wake* (1939) etc. The depiction of the human psyche and the effect of the First World War in everyday life, and society in these works mark the characteristics of the modern period in literary practice. Joyce's novel *Ulysses* which was first published in serial form in 1918-1920 and then in book form in 1922 received critical acclamation for its stream-of-consciousness technique, use of symbolism, and choice of theme. The novel is divided into three parts entitled *The Telemachia*, *The Odyssey*, and *The Nostos*. The novel deals with the parallel story of Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus on the day of 16th June 1904. The interesting plot structure does not follow the linearity of time; rather using the stream-of-consciousness technique, Joyce makes the story more engaging. The novel is named after the character of Odysseus who is also known by its Latinised name *Ulysses*. It tries to settle a parallel with the epic poem of Homer, *Odyssey*. With the publication of this novel in 1922, the character of Stephen Dedalus makes its appearance for the second time in Joyce's writing. Apart from the writing style, the novel gains its popularity because of its attachment with the 1921 United States obscenity trial. However, this novel attracts a good critical acclamation. T.S. Eliot in a review in an American magazine, *The Dial*, praised the novel. He said that – "I hold this book to be the most important expression which the present age has found; it is a book to which we are all indebted and from which none of us can escape" (Eliot 480). Thus, this paper tries to look into the delineation of non-linear time, narration, and stream of consciousness technique in the novel *Ulysses*. The paper also critically analyses the use of irony, humour, symbols, and intertextual references in this novel.