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# **ENGLISH B EXTENDED ESSAY**

## **Category 1**

*November 2019 session*

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**Title:** An analysis of Molly Bloom' monologue in the final chapter of the  
*“Ulysses” Inside the chaotic stream of Molly Bloom ’s consciousness*

### **Research question:**

To what extent does the absence of punctuation marks in Molly Bloom's  
monologue in the chapter “Penelope” of “Ulysses” by James Joyce assimilates

The reproduction of thoughts?

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Dedicated to:

*Marcel Proust*

*My father*

*The woman who lied about her true name*

*Teacher Maria Ines*

*Teacher Ivetty*

*My grandfather*

*"Later, when we remember all the things that we do for a woman, we usually realize that the actions inspired by the desire to show that we love, to make us love, to win favors, occupy hardly more place than those due to human need of repair our mistakes before the being we love, by simple moral duty, as if we did not love him."*

-Marcel Proust

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The topic of this extended essay is about the last chapter of the “*Ulysses*” of James Joyce. Considering the context of the XX century and the woman in order to analyze the character of Molly Bloom.

The principal motivation to do this work was a reading to the book of “*Ulysses*” and an interest for the character of Molly Bloom and her last monologue in the novel. Also, the interest for James Joyce as a writer and how he can express a lot of feelings and thoughts of the people using complex monologues as we can see in his literary production.

The main problem for this extended essay is “How the absence of punctuation marks can represent the reproduction of thoughts inside the mind of Molly Bloom?” I will answer this question using material that can help me to do a deeper exam to the last chapter, just like the study of Gilbert Stuart and the book of Robert Humphrey, this sources will allow me to make arguments and answer the question.

For do this I divided the extended essay in two parts, the first one to contextualize the character and the space and the second to study the chapter and analyze it Also, I made a qualitative methodology to work during all the task in order to achieve my goals.

## **Chapter I: Ulysses and the XX century**

### **1.1 Ulysses as the new adaptation of the Odyssey in the XX century**

The story of ***Ulysses*** is the record of a single day in the life of Leopold Bloom, June 16, 1904. That day was very much like the other in his life, exempt from the fact that he already knows about the infidelities of his wife. He knows the time when she is going to be with her new lover and also his name, but he doesn't do anything to stop it, he just lives his day like always, but he is anxious about the time and where his wife is, and he can't escape from the feelings that he has for her and how she is going to cheat on him today. In the end of the novel we can only see that nothing changes and we constantly see him with this feeling and with the big presence of the Odyssey of Homer, just like in the chapters or with the characters that appear in a specific episode

### **1.2 The women in the XX century**

“A major historical event has taken place: the dissociation between reproduction and sexuality.” (Marias, J. 1980 p 20) The novel takes place in a context where the woman is becoming independent and now she has sexual freedom, as with Molly Bloom, that despite having a husband she

has many lovers in secret. But this is not something particular of her marriage, she had a lot of sexual adventures with men decades ago, and this also happens in the real world, where with difference of the XIX century where "The social and economic class were a justification to prevent their participation in other activities considered of a male nature" (Daniel, 2013, p. 137). Now the women have more independence and they can be more in society than just a housewife. So, the Molly Bloom shows the reader how there is a big change between the old Penelope of centuries ago, and the new Penelope of the XX century.

### **1.2.1 What symbol is a woman like Molly in her century?**

In the story "The Dead", the character Gabriel Conroy sees an appreciation of "grace and mystery" in his wife's "attitude" leading him to think of her as if "she were a symbol of something." The same thing happens with Molly Bloom; Joyce gives her an important personality in his century. With Molly, Joyce wanted to entail a certain ideal of the Irish womanhood, an increasingly spiritualized, ethereal, and maternal ideal. In the episode of "Penelope" we can see the feminine aspect of Joyce with the legacy of Homer and his mythicization. The first step of Joyce with Molly was to demythologize the reality of womanhood, which has been absorbed into the symbology of the Irish nationalism. While deglamorizing her, he recognized that a woman's right to her private reality is against cultural expectations. With Molly, he symbolically enunciated the plenitude and the logic of an ordinary life as a counter-force to the demands and

preoccupations of grand history. Molly also thinks of herself in “Ulysses” as the solvent of racial and national distinctions, which have abetted conflicts and vitiated the ordinary life of the XX century. In her choice of lovers, the race or nationality does not exist. For her, they are irrelevant; the fact to be a man suffices.

### 1.3 The character of Molly Bloom

The first appearance of Molly Bloom is in chapter four of *Ulysses*, Calypso; she is introduced as a pretty woman, a result of a mixture of Spanish, Jewish and Irish extraction, who is not satisfied by her husband, so she has had many lovers since she was young. Currently, she has a new lover, Blazes Boylan, who is her manager; the infidelity of both is the main problem of the novel, and the constant reasons of all the agonies that Leopold Bloom goes through during the novel. The character of the **Odyssey** that she represents is a Penelope of the modern age-now she does not wait for her **Ulysses** to come back home. Now she has many lovers behind his back. She could be compared with characters such as Anna Karenina or Emma Bovary, who have lovers behind their husband's backs. They are in search for new emotions and sensations and the love that their husbands cannot give them. The difference between these two characters that we mentioned previously is that Molly Bloom sees her lovers as mere toys, and her delinquencies as a natural phenomenon; thus we can state by the manner, she manipulates Leopold Bloom, her husband, and she is a bad person.



### **1.3.1 Molly as the Penelope of the new century**

“I believe it is the odyssean reader’s experience of Molly’s nominalistic, idiosyncratic and eccentric narrative that confirms the values of a novel” (Schwartz, D 1987. pp 268). Schwartz characterizes Molly’s thoughts as an indicative of the universal thoughts, desires, and needs of the women that the patriarchal pattern seeks to diminish. The times changed and the ancient Penelope that Homer created, now is for Joyce an emancipated woman who is driven by her sexual desires. The last chapter of the novel where she is the main character, shows us how Molly deviates from the normal patriarchal standards which coded women during the early twenties. Joyce shows us the complexities of a modern woman in a class system where the male is dominant. Making use of the experimental style in the last chapter of his novel he “navigates the polarities between feminists and conservatives” (Bryen, A. 2000. pp 8) and Molly is constantly resisting the traditional norms of society. During all the entire chapter of Penelope we can see how she arises criticism about contradictions of a woman’s and man’s world. That means she resists the Catholic notions that concern women and their purposes with the fact that it lies heavily on the patriarchal tradition. When she was thinking about her experiences while young, she starts asking why she must confess to the Father Corrigan, given that she “has already confessed it to God” (Joyce, *Ulysses*, 609). Molly thinks that priests are only ordinary men and she challenges their authority and religiosity as well, exemplifying Molly as a double oppressed woman, subject to the authority of God and men. Our new Penelope is not the one that receives dozens of marriage proposals

while she is waiting for her Ulysses, she searches for lovers when she has her Ulysses at home.

#### **1.4 A summary of the chapter Penelope**

The chapter "Penelope" is the last chapter of *Ulysses* and also, the hardest part of the book to read. This chapter has one peculiarity, and it's the absence of the mark points in order to represent the flow of thought. "A chaotic torrent of memories, sensations, reflections, emotions, whose sorcerous strength is due to the unkempt and broken appearance of prose that enunciates and preserves it. Below its ungainly exterior, a rigorous coherence, a structural conformation that obeys an original model or system of norms and principles from which the writing of the monologue never departs." (Vargas Llosa, 1997; 26) This chapter consists of an internal monologue in which Molly Bloom is the main character; she settles herself to sleep, but her mind she is restless and her body too. In her mind she sees herself again as a flapper in Gibraltar; she remembers the ways of her earliest lovers, her father and other memories. In her monologue we can see the presence of three men, Poldy or her husband, Blazes Boyland and Stephen Dedalus. In this monologue we can see the grievances of the eternal female against male, her husband's opinions, and her reasons why she has lovers, her cult of personal beauty, mentions of lover that appeared in her life till today and finally the purpose of marriage by Leopold Bloom.

#### **1.4.1 The monologue in the chapter Penelope**

We can call the literary technique that reproduces human mechanism of thought “stream of consciousness”; this literary technique arose as a way to represent the psychic life of a person. “The attempt to create human consciousness in fiction is a modern attempt to analyze human nature” (Humphrey, 1954, pp 6, 8). During all *Ulysses* we can see the four techniques of writing consciousness that Humphrey described: the soliloquy, the omniscient description, the indirect interior monologue and the direct interior monologue. The monologue at first sight is chaotic because of the absence of punctuation; this fact presents freedom in the style of writing, Molly’s language during this chapter doesn’t follow any linguistic systems, showing the relations established in her mind. The reader has to follow the direction of Molly’s thoughts making use of the internal relations and textual cohesion. During this chapter, Joyce used his internal discourse, his own references and his cultural and linguistic competence to create the monologue. Despite this, we can see some criteria adopted, such as: sentences developing new topics, sentences that expand the topic in question, sentences that introduce an aside or parallel thought that is not linked to the previous or following the topic, and the presence of a connection or marker that shows the break of a thought. The previous criteria show the reality of the monologue in terms of text structure. Respect to the types of cohesive relations we can see: reference, conjunction, and lexical cohesion. The lexical cohesion and reference appear in the chapter as semantic relations that are linked to the

idea of topic sustainers, and finally conjunction reflecting the presence of the markers or connections that make the fluidity of the monologue signaling the introduction of elements to the next.

## **Chapter II: The marks and the chapter "Penelope"**

### **1.5 The model of writing in Penelope as a way to assimilate thoughts.**

The model that Joyce used for this last chapter of the novel is a creative way to reflect the mind of a person, in this case, a woman. He doesn't make use of the punctuation marks to assimilate the form of how fast our brain works to start making a monologue right from the start, without any formal structure that is common in some texts or dialogues, or any patterns to follow, just how the ideas or thoughts come to our mind. The model that Joyce created consisted of a transcription of Molly's thoughts while Leopold Bloom is climbing into the sheets and asking her to serve breakfast at bed. The first sentence of Penelope starts the chapter with a denial of the confines of its physical setting, implicating, multiple past epochs and spaces where the thoughts of Molly occurred. Molly first start thinking about his husband and the breakfast that he made to her, also, in this first sentence of her monologue we can explore the hard relation with her husband, she lays the day's infidelities alongside with past wavering of his affections and she reveals that Bloom has subjected her in the past to an erotic catechism; she concludes with details of her afternoon with Boylan. In the second part of the text Moly remarks on the sexual differences between men, relating to the origins related to the opposite sex; she inducted us into Gibraltar, where this experience

happens, to return to her first narration about Bloom; she also says that Bloom was unable to perceive what should have been a prominent otherness in his wife until he married her. After that, she mentioned about a present from her husband; she contextualizes her own life against folk wisdom and pieces of sensational journalism, showing a feeling of regret to other famous adulterers. The third sentence consists of showing the desires to satisfy her lovers and comparisons among the attributes of both sexes; this sentence focuses on Bloom and how she thinks of some of his attitudes. Her fourth sentence begins with her childhood memories in Gibraltar and her entry into the sexual awareness, feeling nervous and anxious because she has problems with some words that intrude with her rhythm and flow of her thought. The fifth sentence is about one of her first lovers, Lieutenant Mulveys, memories of their passions and reflects about her subconscious. The sixth sentence consists of Molly remembering her winters in Gibraltar when she was a child; this sentence is about herself and some projections of a strong female. The seventh sentence is about thoughts that Molly has over Stephen and her husband, and also the eccentricities of Bloom. Finally, the eighth sentence is about flowers and memories about Leopold when they were young and the purpose and future plans of her relation with her husband. The absence of the punctuation marks during this chapter gives the reader a sensation of stress and also importance not to understand what Molly is thinking because of the lack of connection with some of her thoughts. During this chapter, the movements of Molly Bloom's thoughts appears at first sight, with no law. But also during all the chapter, with a close examination we

can know that there are certain words which seem to shift the trend of her musings, and might be called wobbling-points of the monologue. These words consist of: woman, bottom, he and man. After each of these there is a divagation in her thoughts, which revolve about herself as a general rule

### **1.6 Why the chapter Penelope is the most important of Ulysses to assimilate the reproduction of thoughts?**

The monologue of Molly Bloom in Penelope provides the reader with detailed picture of all her life with Bloom, since he proposes to her years before until nowadays, she thinks of herself, her youth, her grievances, her childhood, her lovers and loves since she was young and today. Her monologue is also a retrospective of all of her life, since childhood which she dimly remembers, to these days where she is asleep; through all the monologue we can observe her growing, moving, expanding, just as the child's vision gradually extends beyond the limits of childhood to a wider scope of experience, in increasing circles of intellection. She begins as an ordinary woman in Gibraltar, ending up as a famous singer in Dublin; she also found more romantic climates and better lovers than her Leopold. During all this chapter we can see the nature of the chapter from its start to end, where the concluding pages show us an extended passage of a vivid lyrical beauty, which is intensely personal and symbolic of the divine love of Nature for her Poldy and all life; it is also in this chapter where we know about the hidden symbolism of this character, that can be associated

with Penelope. Why did Joyce choose to end *Ulysses* using Molly's monologue? And why many of those final words stick in the reader's minds more than any other? The answers for these questions are that in this chapter we can see the conscience, peculiar and idealistic conscience of Joyce, and he achieves to show, with only forty pages, the perspective, thoughts and mind of a woman with great success. This also happens because of the feeling of madness that we as readers have while reading this chapter, the feeling that we don't know what is going to happen in the future of her relation with Leopold.

### **1.7 The absence of punctuation marks during Penelope**

Why did Joyce omit the punctuation marks during this chapter? The answer to this question is to assimilate the reproduction of thoughts that Molly had in her mind; they most appear as they are, in a pure state, in which we get to know that they get out of her mind and do not like the traditional way the author presents the monologue as a formal text so that the reader can understand the character by grasping it in its full scope. With this detail Joyce tries to create a feeling in the reader that in this chapter the time doesn't exist, just as this happens in our mind differently; this allows Joyce to have more freedom to express all the thoughts and ideas of her character without any pause that could delay the reproduction of thoughts that she tries to reflect or with any rules that can create walls in the message that she transmits to her readers. The absence of



punctuation marks during this chapter full of realism transforms the last episode of the novel into difficult pages where we can see the record of inmost thought by a woman in its true form and also the feminine psychology of an adulterous women in only a few pages. This singularity makes this chapter a hard part to translate and also understand; this chapter needs some re-lectures to know what Molly is telling us, what characters, places and periods of her life she is talking about and all of this is because of the absence of punctuation marks. Leaving aside the difficulty, this resource also creates a game with words and with the order of the text, just as it appears in the final page, "I put my arms around him and drew him down to me so he could feel my breast, all my perfume; his heart was going like mad and I said, "yes I will" (James Joyce, 1922, pp 644) in this passage Joyce is exhibiting real and intersecting emotions; the passage also exemplifies Molly's need to be desired, she accepts the marriage proposal despite her true desires. This kind of parts that appear in all her monologue leaves a sensation that we don't know all about her, that she is omitting some things or maybe she doesn't remember or she thinks that it is irrelevant to tell us, thus, Joyce created a barrier between Molly and her readers; she gives the reader the real sensation that we are inside her mind, which is full of mess and madness.

### **1.7.1 How the absence of points in “Penelope” is the reflect of the modern novel in the XX century**

With writers like: Virginia Wolf, William Faulkner, Marcel Proust and James Joyce, the literature during the XX century change forever. These authors put the psychology of the characters as the main element of the novel to explore, and writers like Virginia Wolf and James Joyce explore more on the stream of consciousness in their characters. “The absence of punctuation is a trick to reproduce the impression of an unorganized rambling of ideas in Molly’s mind before she falls asleep.” (Erwin, S. 166. 1979). In internal monologues of Virginia Woolf, we can see the use of anaphora as a linking device that make her sentences more rhetorical, and also, the use of words as “when” “if” “and” “but”, contributes to the slightly rhetorical effect, and, in internal monologues of James Joyce as the one of Molly Bloom, we can see how short pure nominal sentences predominate, serving the expressionistic purpose of emphasizing the essential, characterizing the unformulated linguistic stage of the pre-speech level of consciousness, and suggesting colloquial speech habits. With the absence of points and the use of the flashback to show important aspects in the life of Molly Bloom, Joyce, created an original and avant-garde monologue where his character can say big amounts of information in only a few pages.

### **1.7.2 Why the absence of punctuation marks is connected with the reproduction of thoughts?**

During this chapter, there are not discursive connectors, the text present us the ideas of Molly in the order that they come to her head “the thoughts and impressions of a woman lying down, in the troop of associations in which the present and the past are mixed” (Crespin, A.2009), the text continues without an explanation of what we are reading and the connection that exist between them. In addition, the reader has to make an effort to separate one idea from another and know when the subject has been changed, it is difficult to separate one topic from another, this happens because of the absence of punctuation. We can see that the lexicon sound natural and seem totally believable in the mouth of Molly Bloom. Molly does not talk to anyone, but to herself, that’s the reason why she uses words or colloquial expressions, and even vulgar related with sex as “do it somewhere and the last time he came on my bottom when was I...” (Joyce. 1992. 609), she doesn’t need any formal expression to talk or keep something in secret, this monologue happen in her mind and we can see her thoughts as she is immersed in them, the verisimilitude is achieved by association and abrupt changes of theme plus a lack of punctuation and connectors, and a vulgar and informal vocabulary. That aspects make “Penelope” a faithful reproduction of the thoughts of a character.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

To conclude, the absence of points in this chapter is necessary to assimilate the reproduction of thoughts of Molly Bloom. Is true that, in the chapters where Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom were the protagonists that they have points and an experimental writing to reproduce their thoughts and they achieved this with points but, in the case of Molly it is necessary for the absence in order to create the mental chaos that Molly she has.

Also, they are necessary to avoid stopping the torrent of ideas, memories and thoughts that are presented in her chapter. The last chapter of the novel shows us a lot of past memories in the life of Molly and if we start using the points we are going to lose the speed of the narration and we are going to stop feeling that we are inside the mind of a woman.

With the absence of punctuation marks, James Joyce has more facilities and freedom to express the thoughts of Molly, without the mark points he is able to start mentioning different aspects of Molly in a complete disorder and sometimes with no relationship with the things that she was telling lines before. With this he can tell many aspects of her life with only a few pages.

Finally, a complete absence of punctuation marks made James Joyce able to give Molly a strong role in the society as an example of a new woman being born in the XX century. This, with the memories that are mentioned in her monologue create the role of a strong woman in a century were her role was relegated.

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