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MODERNISM AS A LITERARY MOVEMENT AND JAMES JOYCE'S ARTISTIC STYLE

Abstract: *This article explores the literary and aesthetic significance of James Joyce's work within the framework of Western modernism at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Modernism is examined as a non-classical aesthetic paradigm that emerged in opposition to rationality, normativity, and mimetic representation characteristic of classical literature. The study focuses on the fundamental principles of modernist poetics—stream of consciousness, fragmentation of time and space, linguistic experimentation, intertextuality, and the crisis of the inner self—as exemplified in Joyce's novel Ulysses. The analysis demonstrates that Joyce transforms language into a central meaning-producing element of the text and constructs a complex artistic model of modern consciousness. The article concludes that Ulysses represents a culminating achievement of modernist aesthetics and occupies a canonical position in twentieth-century world literature.*

Key words: Modernism, stream of consciousness, modernist poetics, linguistic experimentation, intertextuality, inner self, narrative fragmentation, aesthetic paradigm, non-linear temporality, crisis of the self, literary modernity, interior monologue, narrative discourse.

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Introduction

Introduction Modernism is interpreted not merely as a stylistic innovation but as a complex philosophical, psychological, and cultural phenomenon that arose in response to the crisis of classical aesthetic values and the profound social transformations of modernity. The article outlines the theoretical foundations of modernism, emphasizing its rejection of rationalism, harmony, and linear narrative structures, and highlights the influence of Friedrich Nietzsche's individualistic philosophy and Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory on modernist thought. Within this framework, James Joyce is examined as a central figure whose creative practice embodies the essential features of modernist poetics.

According to Western theoretical typologies, the historical development of artistic literature is conventionally divided into four stages: pre-classical,

classical, non-classical, and post-classical. Classical aesthetics—associated with Aristotelian, Kantian, and Hegelian traditions—emphasized rationality, harmony, normativity, and mimetic representation. Modernism emerged as a radical rejection of these principles, offering an alternative aesthetic paradigm grounded in fragmentation, subjectivity, and psychological depth.

Initially regarded as the final stage of artistic development, modernism was later recognized as part of a broader post-classical transformation of literary and cultural thought. This article situates modernism within this theoretical framework and focuses on James Joyce as one of its central figures, whose work embodies the core aesthetic principles of the movement.

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Main Part

According to theoretical typologies developed in Western literary scholarship, the history of artistic literature is conventionally divided into four stages:

- a) the pre-classical stage;
- b) the classical stage;
- c) the non-classical stage;
- d) the post-classical stage.

In the history and theory of aesthetics, Aristotelian, Hegelian, and Kantian approaches are regarded as classical orientations. There is a logical basis for defining the period before antiquity as pre-classical literature. Modernism emerged precisely as a result of rejecting and negating these classical aesthetic principles and can be understood as a system of scientific and aesthetic views formed in opposition to classical traditions. Although modernism was initially regarded as the latest artistic and aesthetic movement, time has shown that this claim was inaccurate. Literature and art also entered a post-classical stage that differs fundamentally from all previous approaches to artistic interpretation and representation.

Identifying the defining features of modernism—as a mode of philosophical and artistic thinking that replaced the long-dominant classical tradition—has significant theoretical and practical importance[1, p.248]. Modernism emerged as a complex of theoretical views expressing the spirit of its time against the backdrop of radical change, industrialization, urbanization, the impact of World War I, and the rejection of traditional value systems [2]. In contrast to classical aesthetics, modernist theory and practice elevated not only observable phenomena and purposeful human activity to the level of artistic representation, but also psychological states such as boredom, alienation, depression, and fear—states previously marginalized in classical art.

As syncretism intensified—the integration of diverse concepts and systems into a single framework—philosophy became aestheticized, music abandoned harmonic coherence, visual arts rejected external resemblance and formal harmony, and literature, theater, and cinema privileged absurdity, ambiguity, eroticism, and grotesque imagery over realistic representation[1, p.249]. At the same time, the highest achievements of modernist art were produced, becoming a kind of classical heritage of twentieth-century aesthetic thought. Every modernist work, despite its rejection of traditional norms, was created according to carefully conceived internal aesthetic principles and possessed its own internal coherence.

Modernism is not merely a chronological concept but is recognized as a literary movement. Emerging in the late nineteenth century, the term “modernism,” derived from the French word meaning “modern” or “new,” denotes a cultural and philosophical orientation belonging both to its own

era and to the future. It rejects traditional approaches to perceiving, interpreting, and representing the world philosophically and artistically[3, p.140]. Modernism is a multifaceted literary phenomenon grounded in the rejection of classical modes of representation and the pursuit of originality in depicting human experience and reality.

Classical aesthetics emphasized rationality, adherence to established norms, harmony among artistic elements, clarity and uniformity of expression, conventional composition, schematic modeling of reality, idealization, and a polished literary language distinct from everyday speech. Modernism arose as a rebellion against these constraints, developing into a layered system of philosophical and aesthetic ideas that intensified during periods of social upheaval and historical catastrophe. Such instability disrupted emotional equilibrium, reshaped perception, and transformed aesthetic sensibilities[1, p.250].

Literary scholar Sh. Hasanov characterizes modernism as a distinctive literary method that emerged from a desire to examine life more deeply, to name phenomena directly, to diagnose psychological and social transformations within individuals and society, and to escape bookish conventions[4, p.650-652]. In contemporary Western literary theory, modernism is interpreted as a historical phenomenon tied to twentieth-century modernization processes, as a transformative theoretical category of literary and cultural thought, and as a discursive field closely linked with philosophy and social theory. Modernism is not merely the phenomenon of figures such as T. S. Eliot, Guillaume Apollinaire, Marcel Proust, James Joyce, Franz Kafka, William Faulkner, or Ernest Hemingway, but a multilayered structure shaped by diverse languages, cultures, and political contexts.

From the modernist emotional-intellectual perspective, life is inherently chaotic and disorderly; the instability of human existence leads individuals to alienation and isolation; human life consists of irresolvable contradictions. This worldview fostered a pessimistic conclusion among modernist artists that art could no longer impose order or meaning upon life. A striking example of this outlook is James Joyce’s novel *Ulysses* (1922), a landmark event in twentieth-century world literature. The novel appeals not to the reader’s emotions but to intellectual engagement and cognitive effort[5]. Special attention is given to Joyce’s novel *Ulysses*, which is analyzed through key modernist concepts such as stream of consciousness, non-linear temporality, deconstruction of narrative space, linguistic experimentation, and intertextuality. The study demonstrates how Joyce employs interior monologue and associative thinking to depict the fragmented nature of human consciousness and the instability of the modern self. Dublin is interpreted as a symbolic and psychological space, while language is shown to function as an autonomous aesthetic system rather than a neutral medium of representation.

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Consequently, modernism prioritizes expressive techniques over objective representation, focusing on subjective impressions of reality and the play of subconscious impulses rather than on external events. This approach redefines art as an autonomous social-aesthetic phenomenon, accountable neither to moral nor social obligations.

Modernism draws its philosophical foundation from Friedrich Nietzsche's individualism and relies on Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory in interpreting artistic creation[6]. Nietzsche's philosophy asserts that society inherently oppresses the individual, that morality and law function as mechanisms to constrain personal freedom, and that stable metaphysical foundations have collapsed. As a result, modernist art foregrounds spiritual crisis, loss of identity, existential despair, absurdity, and alienation. Freud's exploration of the unconscious further reinforced the modernist focus on instinctual drives and inner psychological processes, often at the expense of social determinism[7, p.73].

The emergence of modern art was catalyzed by the combination of world wars and the erosion of stable social foundations, rendering the world increasingly incomprehensible. Modernist artists rejected the notion of objective truth, asserting instead that truth is subjective and individualized. Consequently, consciousness, unconsciousness, and their interaction became central themes. Modernist writers turned their attention to ordinary individuals, depicting subtle psychological states and internal experiences previously ignored in literature.

Formal experimentation became essential to representing the uniqueness of individual consciousness. Despite stylistic diversity, modernist authors commonly portrayed protagonists as alienated figures struggling against an indifferent or hostile reality. Unlike other literary movements, modernism placed psychological processes at the center of artistic representation, privileging inner experience over external events.

Traditional narrative structures, chronological progression, and realistic causality were abandoned in favor of fragmented, non-linear representations of consciousness. Time and space were reconfigured, and narrative order gave way to streams of thought, memory, and sensation. This shift gave rise to the technique of stream of consciousness, which became one of modernism's most significant innovations.

In comprehensive studies of twentieth-century modernism, the movement is analyzed not merely as a stylistic trend but as a complex cultural-historical phenomenon intertwined with existentialism, psychoanalysis, and modern aesthetics[8, p.1058]. Classical literature presented the world as a coherent cosmos, whereas modernism sought to represent chaos itself as a universal condition. The individual's struggle to locate meaning within an infinite and disordered world became a central concern.

James Joyce is widely regarded as a central figure of modernism, embodying nearly all its defining features. His work demonstrates:

1. stream of consciousness;
2. deconstruction of time and space;
3. linguistic experimentation and intertextuality;
4. the spiritual crisis of the inner self.

Joyce's prose reflects fragmented, associative thought rather than logical coherence, foregrounding inner experience over external description. Stream of consciousness represents mental processes directly, in disordered, fragmentary form, emphasizing non-linear temporality, memory, and psychological depth. As scholar M. Kholbekov observes, Joyce sought to depict the spontaneous flow of thoughts, sensations, and emotions that pass fleetingly through the mind. *Ulysses* thus became an encyclopedic work of modernist literature, inspiring generations of European and American writers[9].

In *Ulysses*, time does not progress linearly; past, present, and future intersect within consciousness. Although the novel depicts events occurring on June 16, 1904, a single day encompasses infinite psychological time. Dublin functions not merely as a geographic setting but as a multilayered psychological, historical, and cultural space.

The novel's language is complex and polysemous, characterized by neologisms, stylistic variation, and dense intertextual references to *The Odyssey*, the Bible, Irish culture, and European literary tradition. Joyce transforms language into an experimental aesthetic field, where syntax, punctuation, and semantics are deliberately destabilized to reflect mental processes.

The spiritual crisis of the inner self constitutes a core theme. Through Leopold Bloom, Stephen Dedalus, and Molly Bloom, Joyce portrays fragmented identities and moral contradictions. Bloom's divided consciousness, Stephen's struggle between religious tradition and artistic freedom, and Molly's associative, unpunctuated monologue collectively depict the instability of modern subjectivity.

In modern art, the principle of imitation characteristic of classical art was completely abandoned, and primary importance was given to form rather than artistic content; form itself was regarded as an essence no less significant than content. As a result, the visual and auditory aspects of the artistic work were absolutized, and it was presented as an entirely distinctive artistic-aesthetic existence that requires no support from other aesthetic phenomena and fully justifies its own being[10, p.88].

James Joyce's aspiration to create a language that surpasses all existing languages and goes beyond the boundaries of tradition has been widely acknowledged by the literary community. He was active during a period when scholars and writers

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primarily focused on the inner essence of the word[11, p.12-16.]. Joyce's works essentially demonstrate the distinctions between meaning and absurdity, as well as the writer's pursuit of innovative ways of conveying ideas and emotions. "Ulysses" serves as a central example of "how an imagined world is embodied by language" and has become a valuable subject for studying various linguistic styles and strategies of interpretation. By emphasizing the richness of linguistic transformations in the novel "Ulysses", one can observe a wide range of linguistic deviations. These styles are continuously integrated into the novel and demand a high level of intellectual capacity and deep textual understanding from both the translator and the reader. Therefore, it is not surprising that Joyce's oeuvre, particularly "Ulysses", has constantly provoked critical reinterpretation, each time revealing the novel in a new light. Through his activities in the 1960s, James Joyce made a significant contribution to the development of modernism. It is well known that Joyce's desire to develop language extended beyond the limits of tradition.

Such features are abundant in "Ulysses"—from the major principles governing the overall form and structure of the novel to microelements such as sentence arrangement, the nature of language, and principles of verbal address. Why are they of primary importance in "Ulysses"? Our answer is this: because Joyce directly and actively employs all of them as meaning-laden, logic-rich (one might also say symbolic) elements. In traditional prose, only a very small portion of meaning was assigned to them in a quantified manner, whereas in "Ulysses" a much larger share of meaning is invested in this way. The specificity of the reader's relationship with "Ulysses" is hidden precisely here: there exists a necessity to extract (to calculate, to decode, to uncover) these newly positioned meanings. On this basis, addressing two entirely legitimate questions clarifies the essence and direction of the present study:

First, "Is the reader obliged to do this?" Perhaps these meanings embedded in the "technical" aspects of "Ulysses" are purely technical features that speak only to specialists?

Second, "Is the reader capable of doing this?" Perhaps this task is also within the reach of specialists alone[12, p.11.]?

A. Saidov reasonably emphasizes that due to the complexity of the language of the work, only specialists are capable of fully comprehending its essence.

The linguopoetic analysis of works written in the modernist style sharply differs from traditional poetic criteria. Due to the artistic potential of language, the

stream of consciousness, interior monologue, fragmentary depiction, and the transformation of form into content, analysis is conducted precisely on the basis of criteria corresponding to these features.

In a modernist text, language is regarded not only as a "means of representation" but also as a crucial element that generates meaning. The lexical layer (barbarisms, dialectal words, neologisms); poetic semantics (implicit meanings of words, multilayered content); poetic syntax (violation of grammatical norms) are all subjected to linguopoetic analysis. Fragmented expression of thought, disruption of logical coherence, freedom in the use of punctuation, repetition of vowel and consonant sounds, the use of unexplained metaphors and symbols, mythopoetic imagery, archetypes, intertextual references, the merging of the author's voice with the character's voice, individuality, shifts in perspective, inner "self" speech, semantic metaphor, contrast, paradox, silence, and pause are likewise analyzed from a linguopoetic perspective. The poetics of modernism is based on the violation of linguistic norms.

In "Ulysses", Joyce complicates language, completely departs from grammatical norms, and employs words in new connotations. Dialectal elements, various styles of the English language, jargon and barbarisms, as well as neologisms, are effectively used in the work.

Because the techniques of interior monologue and stream of consciousness are employed, the thoughts are not illogical; rather, they correspond to the natural flow of consciousness—associative, fragmentary, yet organically interconnected. Punctuation rules are violated, some sentences remain unfinished, and logical coherence is deliberately destroyed in accordance with the writer's creative intent. Through this, the complex dimensions of the characters' inner worlds are reflected. Although the novel is constructed on events that take place within a 24-hour period, it is presented as an integral world formed out of fragmented disunity. "Ulysses" establishes an intertextual relationship with Homer's epic "The Odyssey", creating a linguopoetic structure: Bloom as Odysseus, Molly as Penelope, and Stephen Dedalus as Telemachus. Joyce adapts and recreates myth in accordance with modern life. Due to the effective use of the Bible, classical literature, and mythology, hidden references (allusions), cultural codes, quotations, and stylizations transform the text into a text within texts.

In conclusion, James Joyce's *Ulysses* is universally acknowledged as one of the most outstanding achievements of modernist literature. Through stream of consciousness, internal monologue, fragmentation, linguistic innovation, and mythological intertextuality, Joyce elevates language

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to a central aesthetic category. *Ulysses* constitutes one of the most complex and influential works of modernist literature, redefining the boundaries of narrative form and linguistic expression. Joyce's artistic innovations not only reflect the intellectual climate of modernity but also establish a new model for representing consciousness and reality in twentieth-century literature. *Ulysses* constitutes one of the most complex and influential works of modernist literature, redefining the boundaries of narrative form and linguistic expression. Joyce's artistic innovations not only reflect the intellectual climate of modernity but also establish a new model for representing consciousness and reality in twentieth-century literature.

The novel portrays the modern individual's alienation, spiritual crisis, and existential wandering, rendering *Ulysses* a profoundly complex linguistic and poetic creation. Studying its lingvopoetic nature

is essential not only for understanding the novel itself but also for comprehending the deeper aesthetics of modernism.

James Joyce's *Ulysses* stands as one of the most significant achievements of Western modernism. Through stream of consciousness, non-linear temporality, linguistic experimentation, and mythological intertextuality, Joyce redefined the possibilities of literary form and expression. Language in *Ulysses* functions not merely as a means of representation but as a central aesthetic and semantic force that generates meaning.

By foregrounding the fragmented nature of consciousness and the crisis of the modern self, Joyce captured the intellectual and emotional climate of the early twentieth century. The study of *Ulysses* is therefore essential not only for understanding Joyce's individual artistry but also for comprehending the broader.

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