TENNYSON’S “ULYSSES”

exercise 1.

1. The speaker is Ulysses and it is not clear who is the interlocutor, but I think that Ulysses is talking to himself. Indeed the poem is a dramatic monologue.
2. Ulysses’ age is not quoted, but I suppose he is old.
3. Ulysses is in his land: Ithaca.
4. Ulysses remembers his life in his thoughts and thinks about all men he met.

exercise 2.

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| Life on Ithaca (line2-5) | He is uncivilised and restless. Negative adjectives such as idol, aged convey Ulysses’s total dissatisfaction with life on Ithaca |
| His past life (line 6-18) | Ulysses is nostalgic for his past adventure because his travels have exploted him to many different types of people and way of living. Positive phrases such “I cannot rest from the travel”, “drunk delight of battle with my peers”, I am a part of all that I have met” convey is travel satisfaction. |
| View of present and future (19-32) | Ulysses says that it is boring to stay in one place. Ulysses says that life is always a travel and he wants constatly new experineces that will broaden his horizons. Phrases that symbolize his desire to traver are: “all experince is an arch wherethrough gleams that untravelled world”, “to follow a knowledge like a singing star”. |
| Attitude to Telemachus (33-44) | Ulysses introduce his son: Telemachus. Ulysses gives the power of Ithaca to his son because he has the appropriate quality to govern the country. Telemachus does not live for himself but he lives in function of other people.The Telemachus’s quality are: “discerning to fulfil this labour”, “through soft degrees”, “most blameless”. |
| Address to his mariners (45-70) | Ulysses turns to his mariners who propose them a new travel. He is optimistic and he encourages mariners to start a new travel. His optimistic view is represented by: “tis not to late to seek a newer world”, “to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield”. |

exercise 3a.

In the poem Ulysses is an old man and he is unhappy for his present situation. He can not stay in Ithaca because his desire is to travel. During travels he made in his life, he has known joy and suffering. These two factors make life real. Considering Telemachus, Ulysses’ son, you can find a contrast between the protagonist and his son: Ulysses takes decisions only for himself but Telemachus takes decisions for other men. The most important symbol for Ulysses his travel. According to the Ulysses’ vision, if you do not travel, you do not live. Ulysses in the Odyssey is a hero who begins a travel which ends with a shipwreck. Indeed Tennyson creates a hero who exalts his courage and his will to travel.

exercise 3b.

I suppose that Tennyson prefers the Ulysses’ image. Ulysses lives his life travelling. Thanks his travels, he knows new pople and places. While Telemachus does not live for himself but he lives for others. He does not travel but he stays in Ithaca.

exercise 4.

In my opinion, the poem reflects a sense of loss. Ulysses is a old man and in this period he loses the power which is entrusted to his son and Ulysses loses also the possibility to travel.

exercise 5.

The meter used is the free verse. Eache verse has a different number of syllables and there are no rhymes.