Arianna Peruzzi 26/03/2020

**1) Read the poem through and say:**

* **Who is speaking and to whom:** Ulysses is speaking to an undefined audience, that could be one person or a group of people, it is not specified.
* **How old he is:** He is pretty old, at line 49 Ulysses says “*you and I are old*”.
* **Where he is:** Ulysses has just come back to Ithaca, indeed he is in his house because at line 2-3, he says “*barren crags*”. He is bored and dissatisfied, because he wants to travel and to revive his majestic past.
* **What he is setting out on:** He wants to travel because he doesn’t accept the life on Ithaca, and he prefers his previous adventurous life.

**2) Now read the text again, this time paying attention to the development of the argument. Summarize what Ulysses says and feels following the guidelines on the left. For each point consider also Tennyson's vocabulary indicating which words and phrases, in particular, reveal in the hero's traits and attitudes. The first point has been written for you.**

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| **Life on Ithaca (lines 2-5)** | It is uncivilised and… Negative adjectives such as idol, aged convey Ulysses’s total dissatisfaction with life on Ithaca |
| **His past life (6-18)** | He enjoyed and suffered, Ulysses became a name. He is proud and have a hungry heart. He travelled in many cities and he watched different men, climates and governments. He fought many wars and he felt part of all he met. Tennyson’s vocabulary is used to underline the glorious past life of Ulysses. |
| **View of present and future (19-32)** | In the present, he remembers his past adventures with the metaphor “*an arch*” and he saw his future like a “pause” or “an end” of life; these terms underline his suffering. The future is like an “*untravelled world*”: the metaphor explains the only desire is to travel and to explore the world. On the contrary, stay at home is an “*eternal silence*”, is like die. Ulysses is old but he wants to continue to know the world, “*like a sinking star*”. |
| **Attitude to Telemachus (33-44)** | Telemachus is the right king for the “*rugged* *people*” of Ithaca, with “*slow prudence*”, a patience that helps him to make the best decisions “*through soft degrees*”. He is not restless like his father, Ulysses is a good and “*well-loved*” son, he is defined “*blameless*”. He has qualities and attitudes to stay at home, not like his father. |
| **Address to his mariners (45-70)** | Ulysses addressees his sailors to go in search of new lands, to push off and “*smite the sounding furrows*” with the ship. He urges the mariners to “*touch the Happy Isles*”. Ulysses uses words to encourage his old mariners towards new adventures because his fate is to voyage toward new knowledge. |

**3a) How is Ulysses portrayed in the poem?**

**To answer the question, consider:**

* **His present situation**
* **The contrast with Telemachus**
* **What he can be taken to be symbolic of**
* **Whether he differs from the picture we usually associate with the hero of the Odyssey**

At the beginning, Ulysses is portrayed like a king bored and dissatisfied, because he wants to travel and to revive his majestic an dignified past. When he were around the world he is drew as a man enjoyed and suffered, proud and “*with a hungry heart*”. The details shows the glorious past life of Ulysses.

Next he is described again with terms that underline his suffering, because he saw his future like an “*untravelled world*”. Stay at home is an “*eternal silence*”, as die.

The contrast with Telemachus is very deep: Telemachus is the right king for the “*rugged* *people*” of Ithaca, he is not restless like his father, he is a “*well-loved*” and “*blameless*”.

Tennyson’s Ulysses is the symbol of a tireless traveler, generous seeker of ever new experiences, expert of word, but not adapted to the monotony of domestic life in Ithaca. He prefers a life of adventures full of risk, because it is not important to live long but live intensely.

You usually think to Ulysses as a epic heroes who isn’t doldrums, but you analysed an other side of Ulysses, his essence, his young spirit to have a glory life, “*not to yield*”.

**3a) What is the poet’s attitude to Ulysses and Telemachus? With whom does it side?**

Tennyson sides with Ulysses rather than Telemachus because he recognizes his young spirit and his desire for not wasting his life.

Probably Tennyson is ironic toward Telemacus, as the matter he dedicate a few lines to him. Telemacus isn't like his father, he prefers to stay on Ithaca and accept his condition. Ithaca becomes the symbol of a close culture.

**4) The poem was composed when Tennyson was still suffering for the death of his dearest friend, A. Hallam, in 1883. Does the poem reflect a sense of loss?**

The poem reflects the sense of youth's loss but at the same time it conveys the idea of “the need of going forward” and underlines the courage and determination of the hero who can be compared to Tennyson himself thanks to his tragic experiences.

**5) As you will have realised the hero’s feelings are communicated through a careful choice of words. What observations can you make about the meter and the music of the poem and the relationship with its meaning?**

Speaker’s language is unadorned and it expresses Ulysses' conflicting moods as he searches for continuity between his past and future life. There is a contrast between the sentiment of Ulysses’ words and the sounds that express them. Iambic pentameter is often interrupted and enjambments emphasize Ulysses' dissatisfaction and restlessness.