

Research Article

Joshua Elwer*

Smoking in *Ulysses*

<https://doi.org/10.1515/culture-2024-0002>

received May 15, 2023; accepted February 26, 2024

Abstract: *Ulysses* is widely accepted to be a book about everyday existence. Set on a single day, the novel portrays numerous mundane acts through its characters, and of these, smoking is included. Multiple characters smoke on June 16, 1904. Interestingly, typically as a social act, smoking is heavily involved in dialogues between characters. When Joyce's characters smoke, what does it reveal about their discursive habits and, moreover, about their identities? This study will begin by arguing that smoking assists in kickstarting conversations between characters in *Ulysses* and in expressing identities. In such a dialogic novel as *Ulysses*, there are many instances of smoking and dialogue being intertwined. Beyond simply beginning dialogues, smoking is also involved in maintaining dialogues. For example, in the "Telemachus" episode – the opening of *Ulysses* – Haines and Stephen share a morning smoke, and this scene helps set the stage for the relevance of smoking throughout the novel. This article argues that, as a quotidian practice, Joyce's use of smoking with his characters sheds light on, not just the poetics of smoking, but how we humans converse with others through objects on a daily basis.

Keywords: James Joyce, smoking, modernism

Like to give them the odd cigarette. Sociable. (U 5.225)

As James Joyce's epic *Ulysses* is widely accepted to be a book about everyday existence (Kiberd, 2009), it should – taking into account the historical dimension – come as no surprise that the practice of smoking finds its way into its pages in a time where the risks and dangers of smoking were not widely discussed and smoking was a culturally and socially acceptable practice, especially for men. Yet, even though there are multiple smoking scenes within *Ulysses* from "Telemachus" to "Penelope," no extensive research has been conducted on the practice. For instance, even Don Gifford and Robert J. Seidman, in their meticulous *Ulysses: Annotated*, can be left at a loss regarding the significance of smoking in the text. For an annotation in the "Circe" episode referring to Bello's mention of a "good Stock Exchange cigar" (U 15.2897), Gifford and Seidman simply write, "Significance unknown" (p. 502). I will expound upon this cigar below in my analysis; however, the citation is indicative of a lack of research on smoking in *Ulysses* and Joyce's other works in general.

The inclusion and significance of smoking in *Ulysses* are by no means limited to a mimetic representation of quotidian life: There is a dialogic element involved with each act of smoking. By dialogic, I mean as intended by Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of dialogism. According to Bakhtin, "[t]he word is born in a dialogue as a living rejoinder within it; the word is shaped in dialogic interaction with an alien word that is already in the object" (Bakhtin, 2006, p. 279). Speakers, and by extension, literary characters, find themselves in the midst of ongoing dialogues.

In terms of smoking, smoking as a social convention is linked with the occurrence of dialogism in *Ulysses*. Within each act of smoking, characters are *responding* to the utterances of other characters. According to Bakhtin,

consciousness ... is always found in intense relationship with another consciousness. Every experience, every thought of a character is internally dialogic, adorned with polemic, filled with struggle, or is on the contrary open to inspiration from

* **Corresponding author: Joshua Elwer**, Department of Anglistik, Universität Leipzig, Leipzig, Federal Republic of Germany, e-mail: joshua.elwer@uni-leipzig.de

outside itself—but it is not in any case concentrated simply on its own object; it is accompanied by a continual sideways glance at another person (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 32).

This eye toward the Other, or “continual sideways glance” as Bakhtin characterizes it, can be discerned through the interior monologue of some characters and the gestures of others. Therefore, Joyce’s diligent attention given to language is intertwined and modified through his smoking characters. What function does the act of smoking take in *Ulysses*, and what is the dialogic nature of smoking? When Joyce’s characters smoke, what does it disclose regarding their discursive proclivities and, moreover, their identities. By conducting a close reading of *Ulysses*, I will investigate these questions in the following analysis by beginning with the claim that smoking in *Ulysses* kickstarts dialogues between characters.

1 Social Interaction

To begin with, we can read into the first smoking scene in *Ulysses*, which takes place in the “Telemachus” episode when a morning cigarette is shared between Stephen and Haines. The scene begins after breakfast:

—You’re not a believer, are you? Haines asked. I mean, a believer in the narrow sense of the word. Creation from nothing and miracles and a personal god.
—There’s only one sense of the word, it seems to me, Stephen said.

Haines stopped to take out a smooth silver case in which twinkled a green stone. He sprang it open with his thumb and offered it.

—Thank you, Stephen said, taking a cigarette.

Haines helped himself and snapped the case to. He put it back in his sidepocket and took from his waistcoatpocket a nickel tinderbox, sprang it open too, and, having lit his cigarette, held the flaming spunk towards Stephen in the shell of his hands.

—Yes, of course, he said, as they went on again. Either you believe or you don’t, isn’t it? Personally I couldn’t stomach that idea of a personal God. You don’t stand for that, I suppose?

—You behold in me, Stephen said with grim displeasure, a horrible example of free thought. (*U* 1.611–26)

At first glance, there appears to be nothing peculiar at play. There is the affable act of offering a cigarette and two characters share a smoke after eating and continue talking. In fact, “Haines stopped” speaking in order to offer Stephen a cigarette. It would thus seem to be that smoking hinders dialogue. However, the scene is far from innocent, and not just due to the heathenish content of the dialogue: Haines has prearranged intentions for his dialogue with Stephen that come to light through the act of smoking. In this sense, Haines has been in a dialogic mode with Stephen *before he even speaks with him*. Haines’s gestures and words reveal that his consciousness had been geared toward Stephen before the two share a scene.

Haines’s agenda is already hinted at before his physical entrance into the novel. Moreover, Stephen’s antipathy to Haines is alluded to early in “Telemachus” when Buck Mulligan asks, “Why don’t you trust me more? What have you up your nose against me? Is it Haines?” (*U* 1.161–2), which elicits Stephen’s response: “Let him stay There’s nothing wrong with him except at night” (*U* 1.177–8). Stephen is referring to the black panther episode when Haines screamed in the middle of the night (Seidel, 1976, p. 415).¹ Soon after, Stephen accuses Mulligan “[o]f the offence to me” (*U* 1.220) and Haines makes his entrance: “A voice called within the tower loudly: – Are you up there, Mulligan?” (*U* 1.227–8). Haines’s *voice* appears in the novel before his body does. Haines’s voice is thus disembodied and is an organ without a body (Žižek, 2012).² This is significant because the entrance privileges Haines and his *language*, and smoking in *Ulysses* is often tied together with language. The separation of the speaking organ and the body momentarily continues when “a voice asked” (*U*

¹ For more on the black panther incident, see Cheng (1987) and Gordon (1990).

² This is the inverse of Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of the body without organs, which they elaborate on in the study by Deleuze and Guattari (2012).

1.322) about the key to the tower. The voice belongs to Haines, and later, after it has been identified with Haines, it speaks Gaelic to the milkmaid (*U* 1.427), which draws further attention to his act of speaking.

While eating breakfast, Haines opens up with regard to his intentions with Stephen.

—I intend to make a collection of your sayings if you will let me.

Speaking to me. They wash and tub and scrub. Agenbite of inwit. Conscience. Yet here's a spot.

—That one about the cracked lookingglass of a servant being the symbol of Irish art is deuced good.

Buck Mulligan kicked Stephen's foot under the table and said with warmth of tone:

—Wait till you hear him on Hamlet, Haines.

—Well, I mean it, Haines said, still speaking to Stephen. I was just thinking of it when that poor old creature came in.

—Would I make any money by it? Stephen asked.

Haines laughed and, as he took his soft grey hat from the holdfast of the hammock, said:

—I don't know, I'm sure. (*U* 1.480–93)

Haines wants something from Stephen. When the two do smoke together, special attention should be given to *how* Haines offers the cigarette to Stephen. The “smooth silver case in which twinkled a green stone” evidences the higher socioeconomic standing of Haines. Moreover, the cigarettes in the case are ready to be smoked, suggesting that Haines had previously considered crossing a lance with Stephen. In other words, the cigarette is not an innocent exhibitionism of sharing on Haines's behalf – it is a manipulation through and through. This is due to the fact that sharing a cigarette has its conventions, and it would be rude of Stephen to break away from their dialogue while smoking.

While Stephen and Haines are engaged in a dialogue while smoking, there is one more reference to the act of smoking during their discussion about religion.

—After all, Haines began

Stephen turned and saw that the cold gaze which had measured him was not all unkind.

—After all, I should think you are able to free yourself. You are your own master, it seems to me.

—I am a servant of two masters, Stephen said, an English and an Italian.

—Italian? Haines said.

A crazy queen, old and jealous. Kneel down before me.

—Italian? Haines said again. What do you mean?

—The imperial British state, Stephen answered, his colour rising, and the holy Roman catholic and apostolic church.

Haines detached from his underlip some fibres of tobacco before he spoke.

—I can quite understand that, he said calmly. An Irishman must think like that, I daresay. We feel in England that we have treated you rather unfairly. It seems history is to blame. (*U* 1.633–49)

When Haines removes the tobacco from his lip, he is simultaneously gathering his thoughts. Joyce draws the reader's attention to the practice of smoking, and in doing so, there is the “classic Joycean method – the nonverbal communication by insinuation, wink, and nod in which character can be destroyed most effectively in the lacunae of the text rather than on the surface” (Norris, 1994, p. 360).³ Riddled by Stephen's remark about the pope, Haines is unsure of how to proceed and uses his cigarette to buy time. Moreover, by removing the tobacco, we can read into this gesture as the dialogue is not going as smoothly as Haines had planned. Haines offers some platitudes in a weak form of attempting to prolong the dialogue and shifting blame before offering an anti-Semitic utterance:

³ For more on reading into the silences of Joyce's works, especially *Dubliners*, see among others Vanderbeke et al. (2017) and Volpone (2014).

—Of course I'm a Britisher, Haines's voice said, and I feel as one. I don't want to see my country fall into the hands of German jews either. That's our national problem, I'm afraid, just now (*U* 1.666–8).

The smoking scene prefigures another form of anti-Semitism Stephen will encounter that occurs in the “Nestor” episode (*U* 437–42),⁴ as well as prefiguring the problem of history that takes root in the characters of *Ulysses*. Furthermore, in the above passage, Haines's voice is once again detached from his body. Therefore, the smoking scene in “Telemachus” further strengthens the notion that Haines's voice is more prominent than his body.

The next scene in *Ulysses* with smoking, also involving Stephen, happens in the “Aeolus” episode. J. J. O'Molloy utters a phrase before “flinging his cigarette aside” and continuing his address to Myles Crawford, “you put a false construction on my words” (*U* 7.728–9). It is noteworthy that J. J. O'Molloy brings attention to his language through the gesture of his cigarette. The cigarette, as a result, acts as a preface to his utterance. J. J. O'Molloy has lost his interest in being affable through his cigarette and changes the course of the dialogue to a defense of his language. Cigarettes, thus far, are *devices* used by the characters in *Ulysses* to assist them in conversation. As devices, cigarettes can set the frame for a dialogue, buy time for characters to think, or become charitable gifts. This trend of cigarettes as devices continues in “Aeolus” when Lenehan urges J. J. O'Molloy to speak:

—A few wellchosen words, Lenehan prefaced. Silence!

Pause. J. J. O'Molloy took out his cigarette case.

False lull. Something quite ordinary.

Messenger took out his matchbox thoughtfully and lit his cigar.

I have often thought since on looking back over that strange time that it was that small act, trivial in itself, that striking of that match, that determined the whole aftercourse of both our lives. (*U* 7.59–65)

There is a grand pause before the speech begins. Taking advantage of the pause, J. J. O'Molloy lengthens it by preparing a cigarette. Stephen, through his interior monologue, utters a double entendre: It is not only the “lull” that is “quite ordinary,” but also the cigarette. Stephen manifests Joyce's ideology of the quotidian by pointing out the ordinariness of the situation. There is also another smoker in the scene, who “thoughtfully” begins smoking. The thoughtfulness of Messenger is divulged through the act of smoking, not through a different gesture, just as earlier J. J. O'Molloy is portrayed as “taking out a cigarette case in murmuring meditation” (*U* 7.462–3). Moreover, the striking of the match that “determined the whole aftercourse of both our lives” is part and parcel of the chaos of ordinary life (Mackey, 1999) – the seemingly insignificant act of striking a match later has immense consequences.

After J. J. O'Molloy's oral performance, he offers his listeners cigarettes. This is a gesture that is attempting to win over his audience and gain support. The act of sharing cigarettes happens just after the performance, and though it may be a form of gifting, it has hidden motives: To garner support and praise. J. J. O'Molloy immediately asks Stephen if he liked the language (*U* 7.775) while simultaneously offering a cigarette.

Stephen, his blood wooed by grace of language and gesture, blushed. He took a cigarette from the case. J. J. O'Molloy offered his case to Myles Crawford. Lenehan lit their cigarettes as before and took his trophy, saying:

—Muchibus thankibus. (*U* 7.776–80)

Lenehan lights the “cigarettes as before” because of the fact that *every* cigarette in the “Aeolus” episode is lit by Lenehan.

He [J. J. O'Molloy] offered a cigarette to the professor and took one himself. Lenehan promptly struck a match for them and lit their cigarettes in turn. J. J. O'Molloy opened his case again and offered it.

—*Thanky vous*, Lenehan said, helping himself. (*U* 4.765–8)

⁴ For more on anti-Semitism in *Ulysses*, see among others Levi (2002).

Lenehan acts so “promptly” because he is working toward a goal: The reception of a cigarette for himself – his “trophy.” This is not simply a repetitive act of generosity on behalf of Lenehan. Lenehan, like Haines and J. J. O’Molloy, manipulates the practice of smoking for personal gain.

2 Identity Construction

Thus far, smoking has been investigated as a device that aids in the continuation of dialogue, helps readers infer through gestures surrounding smoking the thoughts of characters, and also as a tactical device that can be manipulated by characters. Beyond these functions in *Ulysses*, smoking also aids in the construction of identity. For example, Haines’s cigarette case has a “green stone” embedded in it. The green stone takes the form of attempting to assume an Irish identity or at least sympathy from the British Haines. Lenehan’s acts of lighting cigarettes in order to obtain one thus construct his identity as a moocher. One need look no further than the short story “Two Gallants” in *Dubliners* (1968) to strengthen this reading of Lenehan.

Bloom also encounters acts of smoking in *Ulysses* and shares his thoughts on the practice in multiple episodes. Beginning with the “Lotus Eaters” episode, Bloom sees a boy “smoking a chewed fagbutt” (*U* 5.6). Bloom initially thinks to himself, “Tell him if he smokes he won’t grow” (*U* 5.7–8), signaling an ethics of care on Bloom’s behalf. However, Bloom suddenly reverses his sentiment when he thinks, “O let him! His life isn’t such a bed of roses” (*U* 5.8). The “fagbutt” was most likely picked up off the ground and discloses the young boy’s lower socioeconomic status. Bloom appears to be unsure as to whether or not he should let the boy keep smoking. However, Bloom’s stance on smoking is made clearer upon his meeting with Stephen in the “Circe” episode. Reading into Stephen’s inebriation is aided by his inability to light his cigarette.

STEPHEN

(comes to the table) Cigarette, please. *(Lynch tosses a cigarette from the sofa to the table)* And so Georgina Johnson is dead and married. *(A cigarette appears on the table. Stephen looks at it)* Wonder. Parlour magic. Married. Hm. *(he strikes a match and proceeds to light the cigarette with enigmatic melancholy)*

LYNCH

(watching him) You would have a better chance of lighting it if you held the match nearer.

STEPHEN

(brings the match near his eye) Lynx eye. Must get glasses. Broke them yesterday. Sixteen years ago. Distance. The eye sees all flat. *(He draws the match away. It goes out)* Brain thinks. Near: far. Ineluctable modality of the visible. *(he frowns mysteriously)* Hm. Sphinx. The beast that has two backs at midnight. Married. (*U* 15.3618–32).

Moreover, we, and perhaps including Stephen, do not have a vivid idea of his thought process despite access to his interior monologue. The melancholy Stephen experiences could suggest that he associates the death of Georgina Johnson with the death of his mother. The enigmatic aspect of his act of lighting the cigarette stems from the fact that he does not perceive Lynch giving him one – it suddenly appears to Stephen. We as readers also see another motif manifested through the act of smoking: The “[i]neluctable modality of the visible,” which first appears in the “Proteus” episode while Stephen is walking along Sandymount Strand (*U* 3.1).

Returning to Bloom, his reaction to the drunken Stephen smoking is one of care. When Stephen drops his cigarette, Bloom exhibits his true perspective on smoking.

(The cigarette slips from Stephen’s fingers. Bloom picks it up and throws it in the grate.)

BLOOM

Don’t smoke. You ought to eat. Cursed dog I met. *(to Zoe)* You have nothing?

ZOE

Is he hungry? (*U* 15.3641–7)

Bloom not only tosses the cigarette and discourages Stephen from smoking, but he also actively seeks food by imploring Zoe to get something to eat. In doing so, Bloom's gestures are important steps toward his symbolic fatherhood of Stephen (Ellmann, 1972; Schiffer, 1979). Stephen is older than the boy cited in "Lotus Eaters," presumably much older, that Bloom lets continue smoking. Bloom draws the line with Stephen because Bloom cares for him, and by denying Stephen his cigarette, Bloom's actions indicate his growing identification as a fatherly figure that is compassionate toward the struggling Stephen.

Conversely, in "Circe," before the scene with Stephen attempting to smoke, Bloom takes advantage of the practice of smoking. While founding "Bloomusalem" (*U* 15.1544), Bloom wants to earn support from his audience. In a similar vein as Jesus, Bloom offers "*loaves and fishes*" (*U* 15.1569) to his listeners. More pertinently, among the lengthy list of his gifts, Bloom distributes "*expensive Henry Clay cigars*" (*U* 15.1570). Bloom, just like J. J. O'Molloy in the aforementioned "Aeolus" scene uses smoking as a device to manipulate the masses. Here, Bloom does not seem to be concerned with the negative health effects of smoking. Moreover, Bloom himself in the "Cyclops" episode does indulge in a cigar.

So they started arguing about the point, Bloom saying he wouldn't and he couldn't and excuse him no offence and all to that and then he said well he'd just take a cigar. Gob, he's a prudent member and no mistake.
—Give us one of your prime stinkers, Terry, says Joe. (*U* 12.435–8)

Not only is the narrator's anti-Bloomism on display,⁵ but Bloom's actions suggest that he is attempting to conceal the fact he does not want to drink by ordering a cigar. After all, as Bloom thought earlier, a cigar is "[s]ociable" (*U* 5.225), which underscores the social significance of smoking in *Ulysses*, because by not drinking with the group, Bloom is further an outsider, especially by choosing to smoke a cigarette, and Bloom's act of smoking a cigar in "Cyclops" works against him. First, while Bloom and the Citizen are arguing, Bloom intervenes in the discussion about erections while being hanged.

—Ruling passion strong in death, says Joe, someone said.
—That can be explained by science, says Bloom. It's only a natural phenomenon, don't you see, because on account of the ...

And then he starts with his jawbreakers about phenomenon and science and this phenomenon and the other phenomenon. (*U* 12.463–7)

Yet, what has this to do with smoking? The digression offered by "[t]he distinguished scientist Herr Professor Luitpold Blumenduft" (*U* 12.468) sets up another anti-Bloomism based on the content of Bloom's language and Bloom's cigar when the narrator mocks Bloom's employment of the word "phenomenon."

And Bloom, of course, with his knockmedown cigar putting on swank with his lardy face. Phenomenon! The fat heap he married is a nice old phenomenon with a back on her like a ballalley. (*U* 12.501–4)

We can perceive how the narrator metonymically attacks Bloom by targeting the cigar. The anti-Bloom narrator latches onto an item – the cigar – of Bloom's, and is using it as a stand-in for Bloom himself. In doing so, the cigar becomes a piece of Bloom's identity. The nature of Bloom's identity through the narrator's eyes is, needless to say, biased and myopic, which plays nicely with the theme of sight and blindness in the "Cyclops" episode in general. Later, as the tension brewing between Bloom and the Citizen escalates – "[b]egob I saw there was trouble coming" (*U* 12.1060) – Bloom fumbles in the narrator's eyes in the form of smoking.

—Show us over the drink, says I. Which is which?
—That's mine, says Joe, as the devil said to the dead policeman.
—And I belong to a race too, says Bloom, that is hated and persecuted. Also now. This very moment. This very instant.

Gob, he near burnt his fingers with the butt of his old cigar.

⁵ Margot Norris's instructive article addresses the issue of anti-Semitic characters in the "Cyclops" episode (2006).

- Robbed, says he. Plundered. Insulted. Persecuted. Taking what belongs to us by right. At this very moment, says he, putting up his fist, sold by auction in Morocco like slaves or cattle.
- Are you talking about the new Jerusalem? says the Citizen.
- I'm talking about injustice, says Bloom
- Right, says John Wyse. Stand up to it then with force like men. (*U* 12.1465–75)

The narrator again latches onto Bloom's cigar to divulge his inner thoughts. There is no sympathy to be found in the narrator, nor the other interlocutors for that matter. Bloom's act of mishandling his cigar signifies his temperament: He is standing up for himself amidst an anti-Semitic crowd, promulgating his philosophy of love (*U* 12.1485). Bloom's uneasiness is conveyed to his listeners, and the readers of *Ulysses*, through the way he smokes.

3 Gender

Only male characters have been smoking in *Ulysses* in my analysis. Therefore, by turning to the thoughts and actions of female characters in regard to smoking, a more diverse perspective can be offered. I will begin first with female perceptions of smoking before moving on to female characters smoking.

Gerty MacDowell in the "Nausicaa" episode reminisces and falls to thinking about an "undeniably handsome" (*U* 13.140) man who had "the nice perfume of those good cigarettes" (*U* 13.144–5). Here, it would appear that the adjective "good" denotes a social significance behind the cigarettes being described. Moreover, there is an olfactive element involved with smoking, and this is not limited to Gerty's thoughts in "Nausicaa." In fact, earlier on June 16, 1904, Bloom previously associated the smell of tobacco with men: "Smells of men. Spaton sawdust, sweetish warmish cigarettes smoke, reek of plug, spilt beer, men's beery piss, the stale of ferment" (*U* 8.670–1). After first focalizing on Gerty, the focalization shifts abruptly to Bloom after the Roman candle scene in "Nausicaa." Bloom again focuses on the smell of tobacco when thinking of stereotypically male identities: "Perhaps they get a man smell off us. What though? Cigary gloves long John had on his desk the other day. Breath? What you eat and drink gives that. No. Mansmell, I mean" (*U* 13.1034–6). At this point in my analysis, it would seem that smoking in *Ulysses* is primarily a male practice.

Primarily, but not exclusively, which further strengthens the reading of smoking in *Ulysses* being a male practice, and simultaneously challenges this reading. First, I shall return to Gerty on the beach. Following Gerty's thoughts in the episode, we find her remembering a time when Cissy impersonated a man.

That was just like Cissycums. O, and will you ever forget her the evening she dressed up in her father's suit and hat and the burned cork moustache and walked down Tritonville road, smoking a cigarette. (*U* 13.275–7)

In Cissy's impersonation of her father, smoking a cigarette plays a defining role. Furthermore, it is not Gerty's impression of men that adds to her associations of men and smoking, but a memory of Cissy, another female character in *Ulysses*, and her *actions*.

The notion of smoking being an exclusively male practice, however, is complicated when one returns to the "Circe" episode. For, in this episode, we have female characters smoking. The hallucinatory nature of "Circe" (Gilbert, 1955, p. 311) allows for unique developments in regard to an analysis of smoking in *Ulysses*. The transformations of the characters, particularly, contest the preliminary hypothesis that smoking in *Ulysses* is a male practice. I will first focus on Bella the madam, before turning my attention to the prostitutes. In this episode, Bella and Bloom undergo changes in gender: Bella becomes Bello, a man, and Bloom becomes a woman. This is not merely a venture into drag. Even the stage directions refer to the gender reversals: Bloom is referred to repeatedly as "her," while Bello is referred to by the male pronominal counterpart. Not only this, but the prostitutes in this scene also switch pronouns and forms of address to refer to Bello and Bloom:

FLORRY

(*hiding her [Bloom] with her gown*) She didn't mean it, Mr Bello. She'll be good, sir.

KITTY

Don't be too hard on her, Mr Bello. Sure you won't, ma'amsir. (U 15.2876–80)

Smoking is soon involved in Bello's construction of a male identity. Bello remarks

I shall sit on your ottoman saddleback every morning after my thumping good breakfast of Matterson's fat hamrashers and a bottle of Guinness's porter. (*he belches*) And suck my thumping good Stock Exchange cigar while I read the *Licensed Victualler's Gazette*. (U 15.2894–8)

As written above, Gifford and Seidman note that they are unaware of the significance of the type of cigar Bello alludes to. Picking up on this void, The *James Joyce Online Notes* annotates the Stock Exchange cigar's historical context and its socioeconomic importance as an upper-class cigar (JJON np.) Furthermore, we see again a cigar disclosing a stereotypically masculine personality. Bello soon after is depicted sitting on Bloom's face while smoking a cigar (U 15.2931). Uniquely, unlike any other smoking scene in *Ulysses*, Bello then uses the cigar to indulge Bloom in her masochistic fantasy when Bello "*quenches his cigar angrily on Bloom's ear*" (U 15.2936–7).⁶ In doing so, the cigar becomes a violent device that arouses Bloom, not social at all, or part of a dialogue. However, this reading is tenuous because the question arises: If "Circe" is hallucinatory as Gilbert maintains, are we reading Bello's construction of a stereotypical identity, or is it rather not Bloom's perception of how a woman would adopt certain identity traits when becoming a man? In other words, is smoking in *Ulysses* still confined to male characters?

We can stay within the pages of "Circe" to find an answer. Before transforming into a woman, Bloom imagines "[g]audy dollwomen loll in the lighted doorways, in window embrasures, smoking birdseye cigarettes. The odour of the sicksweet weed floats towards him in slow round ovalling wreaths." (U 15.651–3). Women, here, are imagined with cigarettes, and Gifford and Seidman clarify that "birdseye" cigarettes are a form of specially cut tobacco (461). Smoking can be seen as a practice as part of the lower social status of the working class prostitutes, which was not such an uncommon occurrence by 1904 (Grant, 2015, np.). We finally witness women smoking for the sake of smoking, not in the construction of a different identity, and this is not the only instance. However, the act of smoking by the prostitutes ensures their group identity because smoking "remain[s] central to individual and group identity" (Hilton, 2000, p. 2).

ZOE

Who has a fag as I'm here?

LYNCH

(*tossing a cigarette on to the table*) Here.

ZOE

(*her head perched aside in mock pride*) Is that the way to hand the pot to a lady? (*She stretches up to light the cigarette over the flame, twirling it slowly, showing the brown tufts of her armpits. Lynch with his poker lifts boldly a side of her slip. Bare from her garters up her flesh appears under the sapphire a nixie's green. She puffs calmly at her cigarette.*) Can you see the beautyspot of my behind? (U 15.2283–93, emphasis in original)

The prostitute Zoe accepts the cigarette from Lynch, and in doing so, draws attention to not only her smoking habit but also to her female gender. In other words, rather than shying away from social conventions that demand women should not smoke, Zoe openly accepts being a woman and smoking. Even the manner in which Zoe smokes – "*calmly*" – suggests that she is confident in her identity as a female smoker. Lynch, on the other hand, sees his gift of a cigarette as in need of a reward. Much like Lenehan, who performs actions in the

⁶ Thomas P. Balazs explores this theme in his article (2002).

hope of a reward, Lynch, after giving Zoe the cigarette, then fondles her in a form of male entitlement arising from the practice of smoking, adding yet another harmful effect to smoking.

Molly's interior monologue in "Penelope" may at first glance be more of the same in regard to the aforementioned functions and potentials of smoking. Molly's father is remembered for his pipe (*U* 18.691), and later when Molly is thinking about Milly at one point in the episode, Molly remarks how Milly was smoking: "wanting to go to the skatingrink and smoking their cigarettes through their nose I smelt if off her dress" (*U* 18.1028–9). Interestingly, the scent of smoke is *not* associated with men directly, but with Milly, another female character smoking in *Ulysses*. This could possibly be an attempt by Milly to emulate the New Woman lifestyle that began in the *fin de siècle* (Buzwell, 2014). However, tobacco smoke is part of Molly's construction of a masculine identity at times. Molly wishes Bloom would "even smoke a pipe like father to get the smell of a man" (*U* 18.508–9). Bloom does not smell like smoke, far from it, because he carries a bar of soap with him. Molly is thus attacking Bloom's sense of masculinity, echoing the hostile environment of the "Cyclops" episode.

However, there is one other function of smoking that has not been elucidated yet simply because it also occurs near the end of *Ulysses*. We can turn to the "Ithaca" episode and read Bloom's thoughts on the matter.

Which domestic problem as much as, if not more than, any other frequently engaged his mind?

What to do with our wives.

What had been his hypothetical singular solutions? (*U* 17.657–60)

Among Bloom's list of hypotheticals, smoking appears: "warm cigar divan." Bloom believes that by visiting a smoking establishment (Simply Cigars, 2016, np.), he can salvage his marriage. Viewing cigarettes and cigars as devices, smoking in this scene suggests that smoking can provide marital support. Bearing in mind Molly's wish that Bloom would take up smoking to obtain a manlier musk, this does not seem to be such an outrageous suggestion. However, what a shared smoke involves, as I have maintained, is *dialogue*. In other words, the "warm cigar divan" would put Molly and Bloom face to face and allow them to have a conversation. It becomes clear that Bloom's thoughts are on Molly as revealed through the reference to the "warm cigar divan" even though Molly is physically absent. According to Bakhtin, their dialogue is rife with unfinalizability (*nezaveršennost*). This unfinalizable dimension is at play in the dialogism between Molly and Bloom. For instance, the couple only appears speaking to each other in the "Calypso" episode when the main topic of their morning dialogue is metempsychosis. Yet, against this apparently innocent case of communication is the fact that their dialogue is riddled with *miscommunication*: It turns out that Molly utters "met him pike hoses" (*U* 8.112) instead of metempsychosis, which Bloom corrects. Despite Bloom's correction of pronunciation, he gives Molly the wrong definition of the word because he thinks of metamorphosis (Gifford & Seidman 2008, p. 400). These miscommunications could perhaps be righted, according to Bloom, by visiting a cigar divan where the two could hold a much-needed dialogue.

4 Conclusion

My analysis is far from exhaustive. There are other characters in *Ulysses* who partake in smoking, or in snuff. Moreover, these unmentioned characters can further be analyzed in the terms that I have laid out. There are more nonverbal gestures and constructions of identity through smoking in *Ulysses*. Nonetheless, smoking in *Ulysses* has multiple purposes, oftentimes with dialogue, and by reading into the practice of smoking in the text, we can see how effective interlocutors are in their communication. Joyce does not sequester this practice to *Ulysses*. In "The Sisters" from *Dubliners*, we read the following on the first page of the story:

Old Cotter was sitting at the fire, smoking, when I came downstairs to supper. While my aunt was ladling out my stirabout he said, as if returning to some former remark of his: (*D* 9)

Smoking is associated with dialogue in Joyce's early fiction. Many cigarettes are lit in *Ulysses*, and many dialogues are sparked as a result. The functions of smoking in *Ulysses* can, therefore, provide valuable insights

into the novel and communication among characters. Moreover, if there is a didactic element to *Ulysses*, smoking can instruct us readers as to how smoking can at times be such an instrumental device in everyday communication.

Funding information: Supported by the Open Access Publishing Fund of Leipzig University.

Author contribution: The author confirms the sole responsibility for the conception of the study, presented results and manuscript preparation.

Conflict of interest: Author states no conflict of interest.

References

- Bakhtin, M. (1984). *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (C. Emerson, Ed. & Trans.). University of Minnesota Press.
- Bakhtin, M. (2006). Discourse in the Novel. In M. Holquist (Ed.), *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin* (C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Trans.) (pp. 259–422). University of Texas Press.
- Balazs, T. P. (2002). Recognizing masochism: Psychoanalysis and the politics of sexual submission in *Ulysses*. *Joyce Studies Annual*, 13 (Summer), 160–191.
- Buzwell, G. (2014). Daughters of decadence: The New Woman in the fin de siècle. *British Library*. Accessed May 10, 2023. <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/daughters-of-decadence-the-new-woman-in-the-victorian-fin-de-siecle>.
- Cheng, V. J. (1987). Stephen Dedalus and the black panther vampire. *James Joyce Quarterly*, 24(2), 161–176.
- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (2012). *Anti-Oedipus* (R. Hurley et al., Trans.). Bloomsbury.
- Ellmann, R. (1972). *Ulysses on the Liffey*. Faber and Faber.
- Gifford, D., & Seidman, R. J. (2008). *Ulysses Annotated: Notes for James Joyce's Ulysses*. University of California Press.
- Gilbert, S. (1955). *James Joyce's Ulysses: A study*. Vintage Books.
- Gordon, J. (1990). Haines and the black panther. *James Joyce Quarterly*, 27(3), 587–594.
- Grant, G. (2015). Georgina Grant, smoking and respectable femininity. *Journal of Victorian Culture Online*. Accessed May 9, 2023. <https://jvc.oup.com/2015/05/07/georgina-grant-smoking-and-respectable-femininity>.
- Hilton, M. (2000). *Smoking in British popular culture 1800–2000: Perfect pleasures*. Manchester University Press.
- James Joyce Online Notes. (2022). *A good cigar is a smoke*. Accessed May 8, 2023. <https://www.jjon.org/joyce-s-environs/cigar>.
- Joyce, J. (1968). In R. Scholes & A. W. Litz (Eds.), *Dubliners: Text and criticism*. Viking.
- Joyce, J. (1986). In H. W. Gabler et al. (Eds.), *Ulysses*. Vintage.
- Kiberd, D. (2009). *Ulysses and us: The art of everyday living*. Faber & Faber.
- Levi, N. (2002). 'See that straw? That's a straw': Anti-semitism and narrative form in *Ulysses*. *Modernism/Modernity*, 9(3), 375–388.
- Mackey, P. F. (1999). *Chaos theory and James Joyce's Everyman*. University of Florida Press.
- Norris, D. (1994). The 'Unhappy Mania' and Mr. Bloom's cigar: Homosexuality in the works of James Joyce. *James Joyce Quarterly*, 31(3), 357–373.
- Norris, M. (2006). Fact, fiction, and anti-semitism in the 'Cyclops' episode of Joyce's *Ulysses*. *Journal of Narrative Theory*, 36(2), 163–189.
- Schiffer, P. S. (1979). 'Homing, upstream': Fictional closure and the end of 'Ulysses'. *James Joyce Quarterly* 16(3), 283–298.
- Seidel, M. (1976). *Ulysses'* black panther vampire. *James Joyce Quarterly*, 13(4), 415–427.
- Simply Cigars. (2016). *The history of tobacco in London*. Accessed May 8, 2023. <https://www.simplycigars.co.uk/guide/history-tobacco-london-1877/#:-:text=Cigar%20divans%2C%20as%20they%20were,fashionable%20to%20be%20seen%20in>.
- Vanderbeke, D., Gast, V., & Wehmeier, C. (2017). Of gaps and holes and silence: Some remarks on elliptic speech and pseudo-orality in James Joyce's short story 'The Sisters'. *Literary Linguistics*, 6(1), article 5.
- Volpone, A. (2014). The poetics of the unsaid: Joyce's use of ellipsis between meaning and suspension. *European Joyce Studies*, 23, 87–108.
- Žižek, S. (2012). *Organs without bodies: On Deleuze and consequences*. Routledge.