
Analyzing Elements of Modernism and Modern Androgyny in James Joyce “Ulysses” and William Faulkner “The Sound and the Fury”

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Abstract:

This paper will be focused on two modernist writers: James Joyce and William Faulkner. Through a reciprocal comparison and contrast, it will illuminate elements of modernism as well as of androgyny in “Ulysses” and “The Sound and the Fury”. Joyce and Faulkner have the tendency to express the problems related to native place and culture, different suppressed historiographies within original themes and narrative styles. Fully experimental techniques may be argument as a wish to give voice to the marginalized historiography. Modernist writers claimed the death of the author. In the 20th century, the old concepts of male poet and female muse vanished to leave the place to androgynous imagination that influenced modernist writers. This was a radical change in artistic authority within a world where everything traditional was altered. The way writers have portrayed the source of their inspiration could partially serve as a reflection of their literary and culturally histories. Faulkner’s androgyny is linked to incest, hermaphrodites and pregnancy. Joyce investigates his masochistic ideas to highlight the barriers of most modernist artists from using an androgynous model in their imagination.

Key words: modernism, narrative technique, historiography, androgyny, authorship.

1. Introduction

The essence of all the modernist writers was based on the biome of method and creativity. “Is it the method that inhibits the creative power?” (Wolf, 2009, p.86). According to Mark Schorer (1962), “the modern consciousness and spirit needed ways of expression underneath, that a technique of the surface alone cannot approach” (p.267). The point is to make the shift from a method focusing on the form to one focusing on the content. In this way all the creative power of this generation of writers would not be limited, but on the contrary, technique or method would open new horizons of expression and interpretation. Imagination too, would be perceived differently based on these developments in the literary procreation. Technique linked to a different assumption of the reality would bring forward the modern tradition and the modern writing.

1.1 Modernist Perceptions in Joyce and Faulkner

It is possible to trace common elements of technique, creative power, perception of reality, imagination and historiography in James Joyce and William Faulkner.

The Sound and the Fury and *Ulysses* are novel city. They explore the social, cultural and political environment of places, Joyce and Faulkner know very well. Every desire, of these authors, to portrait the universal might have been a result to render, with authenticity, their atmosphere. This preoccupation of Joyce and Faulkner, accompanied by their techniques of narration, served as a deep influence to the authors of the

same period or the coming generations. Daring experimental techniques in the center of their works might be augmented as a challenge to give voice to marginalized, hidden and suppressed historiography.

In his Nobel Prize speech, Faulkner (1960) says "I decline to accept the end of man" (p.82) In this acceptance we uncover a "Utopia of Man", as a result a "Utopia of existing", filtered through his characters actions and experimental narrative styles. This utopia generates the apocalypse at the heart of his creative urge when he says that "the world [he] created as ... a kind of keystone in the universe" (Faulkner, 1960, p. 82) would incite its disintegration and his characters too. Readers are presented with different kinds of apocalypse of the characters within Yoknapatawpha, be it individual apocalypse or biblical one.

As modernist writers, Joyce and Faulkner, reconstructed and readjusted their narrative spaces through a density of language. This density makes them influence and at the same time resemble one another in different perspectives. Their resemblance made Hartwick (1999) depict the narration in *The Sound and the Fury* as "more incoherent than Joyce" (p. 629), while Wyndham Lewis (1999) explains that Faulkner's style is more "Joyce than Stein" (p. 643), because it demonstrates "Irish sentiment" (p. 643). Other critics, such as Ó Faoláin (1956) have put Faulkner within Irish atmosphere and environment saying that life in South America resonated as "very much like life in County Cork. There is the same passionate provincialism; the same local patriotism; the same southern nationalism ... the same feeling that whatever happens in Ballydehob or in Jefferson has never happened anywhere else before, and is more important than anything that happened in any period of history in any part of the cosmos" (p.102).

In all his works Faulkner criticized the people and values of the South, creating a love-hate relationship. Because of his avant-garde experimentalism and the occurrence of many illogical aspects in his novels, Faulkner, was criticized by the majority of his contemporaries. Whether his works are "strictly speaking, clinics" (Lewis, 1999, p. 638), his followers are invited to read these narratives by perceiving the misfortunes and fixations of the sick and insane/lunatic. He invites all the world to follow the perspective of "the other" part of South America, which he inhabited with a range of outstanding characters- hunters, businessman, former black slaves, farmers, disposed Indians, aristocrats and numerous age groups of families travelling on different ranks of Southern society. This magnetism to the exploration of "the other" joins Faulkner to Joyce. While describing Joyce's narrative style but also indirectly even talking about his influence in his writing, Faulkner (1960) declares that, "you should approach Joyce's *Ulysses* as the illiterate Baptist preacher approaches the Old Testament: with faith"(p. 77). Joyce power of infection is even inspected in the biblical elements used so much by Faulkner.

The literary style of Joyce and Faulkner is highly experimental. Their complexity is entangled with the desire to retell their native stories perceived through the eyes of the overwhelmed and their literary cosmos, or their whole world apart, are a consequence to readopt their native spaces. This experimentation requires an obscurity of language, abandoning the linear technique of narration and exposition. This obscurity of style was in keeping with the intricacy of the subject, presented by the voice of marginalized and exploited. As a result, these works are full of repetition, long and puzzling sentences, multiple points of view, incoherent punctuation and troubling conclusions. Each of them produces neologism, signaling incoherence with limitations of a conventional language. Joyce includes Hiberno-English and Faulkner includes the African-American style of speaking as a way to illustrate the dissonance creation of voices and techniques, exposing their different cultural traditions. Joyce and Faulkner attack syntax. To Fadiman (1999), a critic of the syntactical structure of Faulkner, states that "as a technician ... has Joyce ... punch-drunk" (p. 263). The subject in *Ulysses* and *The Sound and the Fury* is non-narrative because the primary reason of their writing, as typical representatives of modernism, was to embody in the consciousness of their characters the confused relationships between the modern present and past historiography. The usage of time in these two authors is not a linear development of the plot. Past, present and future are mixed with one another making very difficult the reading for the general audience.

2. Imagination and Authorship

While examining the relationship between the author and his imagination, Ronald Barthes (1993) stated that it was not "a being which precedes or exceeds his writing" (p. 1132). The concept of imagination has changed a lot with the passing of the time, as a result of its different perceptions through different literary periods. The way writers have portrayed the source of their inspiration could partially serve as a reflection of their literary and cultural histories. Literary imagination and the procedures accompanying it are structured to particular cultural requirements and apprehensions. The essence is not so much on the artist's need to be motivated but to get the energy to create its own literary authority within his/her own culture. By imagining the cause of his/her stimulation, the writer assures himself a perception of his/her audience but also a cultural progress, even though subconsciously.

From earlier times, Homer and Plato regarded authorship not as the artifact of an individual ability but as a psychosexual urge. Greek literature of antiquity perceived imagination as a part of divine stimulation. The Greek poet is the singer whose verses are a reflection of the power of Zeus and the love of Muse. The same conception of imagination exists even through the Classical period. The influence of Christianity changed the consideration of the muse, but from the perspective of his father. John Milton and his contemporaries continued referring to the muse as inspirational in their writing process. These writers put the focus of their inspiration in God, through a female mediator.

Consideration on the imagination started to change in the 18th and 19th century as a result of the transformations brought in philosophy, science and by the Industrial Revolution. Essential is the idea of Edmond Burke (1990) saying, "the mind of man possesses a sort of creative power of its own; either in representing at pleasure the images of things in order and manner in which they were received by the senses, or in combining those images in a new manner, and according to a different order. This power is called imagination" (p. 287). Contrary to the previous literary periods, writers of this period controlled and guided their muse. Male Romantic writers totally projected the muse to the female nature. This muse had specific female traits, exteriorized in that of the Mother, the Beloved, and the Sister etc. The purpose is to efface their individuality and empower their force. The theory of romanticism to imagination presents a defense on authorship and independence of male artist in his artistic process.

Modernist literary movement, in the late 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, changes the perception of the author's imagination even the existence of the author himself. The 20th century brought about radical changes in the society, one of them being the recharacterizing of sexual categories, as a consequence of the emancipation and activation of females in every field of the society. This period led to changes in literary sensitivity while whipping male artists to reestablish romantic versions of imagination, but also giving the chance to female writers to recreate their creativity into a new light of development. New theories on sexuality altered the world perspective on a biological basis, emphasizing a three-biological sex model. Consequently, it became impractical for modernist writers to follow the Romantic model of imagination—female muse and male artist, questioning the authority of the male artist and the position of female artist.

Modernist writers conceive the imagination as both male and female. More specifically, female writers added their viewpoint by considering the imagination moderately male, existing within a female conscience. An androgynous imagination assisted male modernist writers, to find ways renovating artistic conceptions to adhere to new cultural changes, whereas it helped female modernist writers transform their situation from object to subject active architect. Using the image of the third sex in the creative practice, it offers the possibility for the reevaluation of artistic authority, in a period when the traditional techniques of artistic perception have failed—even the artistic muse, from the traditional order of sexual conceptual.

Every modernist writer used different forms of the modern androgyny. Every androgynous model reflects the apprehension of these writers to find the muse and generate art. Their attempts reveal the crises of authorship. Therefore, it vanished the idea of an individual ingenious mind, when the world creating has changed transforming in a mechanical one, interrelated by other powerful components. Subjective imagination stopped existing generating "the death of the author" (Barthes, 1993, p.).

3. Modern Androgyny in Joyce and Faulkner

Similar to Joyce, even Faulkner was influenced by modern androgyny. Faulkner's novels are full of allusions to either, a man or women androgyny. But, his androgyny is linked to incest, hermaphrodites and pregnancy. Different critics categorized his usage of androgyny to distinct reasons. Some of them outlined his interest to androgyny in his romantic affection (Brooks, 1978); his opposition of a patriarchal gender (Jones, 1986); his effort to recover the narrative authority and maleness (Irwin, 1975). Modernist writers, especially Joyce and Faulkner, were influenced and furthermore included in their works ideas from different sex theorists. One of them was Havelock Ellis (1915), who declared that "each sex is latently hermaphrodite" (p. 79-80). Ellis and other contemporary theorists supported a connection between androgyny and creative ability. All these modernist writers reflected a deep crisis of artistic individuality, when the traditional perception of the imagination was no longer applied.

In his novels, Faulkner associates creativity to the blurring of the sexes. The only way to find creativity is to adapt to the new cultural and social conditions of the modern society. He declares his poetic development to be the result of double-sex imagination (male-female). He like Joyce "envisioned an androgyny consciousness, infinitely dynamized by an incessant process of exchange" (Cixous, 1980, p.254). He possesses a "bisexual" artistic consciousness" (Gwin, 1990, p.4), in which his male consciousness interrelates with the "subversive deconstructive" (Gwin, 1990, p.25). Including elements of the female in his awareness, produces apprehension, typically of the modern period, that intimidates the mind of his heroes and heroines. Whereas Joyce releases the sublime, as a masochistic element, Faulkner emphasizes elusiveness. This conception of the androgyny exposes the cultural anxieties that suffered all the intellectuals of his period of writing.

Faulkner, as well as Joyce, showed an interest to the romantic viewpoint of authorship. Each of them readopted it to the new modernist perspective, making use of the contemporary sexual iconography. His model of imagination is not ventured in the female stature of Sister, Beloved and Mother. Faulkner visualizes an originator, who takes the form of a psychic hermaphrodite. He makes the female part of his consciousness. Like Joyce, in *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, even Faulkner, in *Elmer*, is noticed the relationship between sexual and artistic improvement. Consequently, this is an example, where the androgyny is joined to imagination.

While meeting for the first time the character of Stephen, in *Ulysses*, it is observed a wish to accomplish his artistic prospective on one side, and an apprehension for the feelings toward his mother, on the other. The presence of the mother's image includes a major part of the scenes that torture him constantly because of his refusal to pray on her deathbed. The tortured feeling is an effect of Stephen desiring the mother's death, different from the oedipal complex, with the intention of having creative authority. The mother defends him from the devastating pressure of a patriarchal society. This relation becomes more petrifying than the oedipal complex of the father.

Stephen makes a comment on a young student's mother, saying, "but for her the race of the world would have trampled him underfoot, a squashed boneless nail" (*Ulysses*, 1986, p. 23), exploring a harmful dependence that obliterates individualism and creativity. He rejects the significance of females in the creative process. To R. Barrie Walkley (1980) "belonging to this turning point in society when the tie of parentage, till then recognized in maternity, was extended to take in paternity" (p. 57). According to him, Stephen summons an experience when the husband imitates the act of giving birth as a symbol for his inspiration. He uses this element to restate a masculine discussion. The phantom of the mother disturbs him all the time and this indicates that he possesses an androgyny imagination. At the end of the narration he is incapable of identifying between son and mother, male and female, declaring the human soul is androgynous: "The playwright who wrote the folio of this world and wrote it badly... is doubtless all in all in all of us, ostler and butcher, and would be bawd and cuckold too but that in the economy of heaven, foretold by Hamlet, there are no more marriages, glorified man, an androgynous angel, being a wife unto himself" (*Ulysses*, 1986, p.175) The challenge to categorize with the female is converted into a dreadful vision that outcomes the assassination of

the mother, with an inclination to abandon his creative imagination. Finally, he turns back to the protected world of the father "Pater! Free!" (Ulysses, 1986, p.466).

By means of the character of Bloom, Joyce validates this representation of creativity. This male artist elucidates the basis for the creation of his characters and the magnetism towards a creativity of androgynous structure. Paul Scorn (1974) says, "This combination of the masculine and feminine traits in a single individual is a higher form of human life." (p.114, 109) According to him a huge part of Ulysses is concerning. Consequently, to Joyce no sexual specification and no muse influence, is a display of the highest creative capacity. Bloom exposes his masochistic fantasies. Through Bloom, Joyce investigates his masochistic ideas to highlight the barriers of most modernist artists from using an androgynous model in their imagination. In this modern artist as in all other modernists, political and social impediments are linked with artistic stoppage and sexual oppression.

Through his masochistic fantasies, Bloom can expose his artistic and imaginative elements. This idea suggests that his artistic muse is linked to androgyny. If the muse is female, brings an artistic stumbling block. Like Bloom, even Joyce artistic formation is within the theory of a man with the characteristics of a woman. According to his biographer, Richard Ellmann (1982), "Joyce Self-conception revolved his theory that like Bloom, he was a womanly man" (p.51). Living in a new world, with a new perspective of sexes, Joyce located himself in an environment to validate his intellectual vow out of traditional sexual orientation.

Faulkner shows a personification with one of the characters of *The Sound and the Fury*, Quentin. To Jackson Benson, "Faulkner endows (Quentin) with the equipment of the artist- the awareness, imagination, conscience, and civilized burden- so that Quentin comes to represent both the modern artist in general and also, in many revealing ways, the agony of Faulkner in particular" (Benson, 1971, p.143). In this novel, Quentin reveals the risk of a romantic imagination. Quentin has the necessity to create a female individual to idealize. This individual is widely represented in his sister-Caddy. Quentin looks to own and have within his consciousness, a woman he can never possess. Caddy is a resemblance of a part image Quentin has for himself, the one he rejects. In an episode, Quentin describes the ceremony of her marriage and her leaving home: "She ran out of the mirror like a cloud, her veil swirling in long glints her heels brittle and fast clutching her dress onto her shoulder with the other hand, running out of the mirror the smells roses roses the voice that breathed o'er Eden. Then she was across the porch I couldn't hear her heels then in the moonlight like a cloud, the floating shadow of the veil running across the grass, into the bellowing" (*The Sound and the Fury*, p.81). Her leaving is a metaphor for a defeat of himself, of that female part who "wouldn't look at me" (*The Sound and the Fury*, p.94). Therefore, this leaving result in the devastation of his identity and a spiritual absence due to the projection he puts on Caddy. The fury and nervosism he projects on Caddy are recognized by fact that she will no more reflect an image of Quentin on her. Her leaving could be compared to that from paradise and fall in hell.

By destroying this self reflection of their relation, Quentin's life stops operating emotionally, sexually and artistically. Quentin shows the elements of incest with his desire "to isolate her out of the loud world" (*The Sound and the Fury*, p.177). By doing so, he wants to possess her in the mirror he has created in his head, a place where "nobody else there but her and me" (*The Sound and the Fury*, p.79, 119). It might seem to have the projection of a physical incest between the sister and brother, but the issue is deeper than this. The saying of his father hinds a real picture of the reality the son lived, "an apotheosis in which temporary state of mind will become symmetrical above the flesh and aware both of itself and the flesh it will not quite discard (he) will not even be dead" (*The Sound and the Fury*, p.177). Quentin thinks of producing a feeling of transformation, pass the physical borders and join within his awareness even a piece of himself reflected in Caddy. His incest is a mental connection, not physical. In reflecting his androgyny onto his sister, Quentin creates a powerful forbidden structure of androgyny creation. In this novel psychic hermaphrodite is related to psychic incest.

Quentin is afraid of a "womanly man". By displaying his womanly part on Caddy, he accelerates the emasculation he wanted to prevent. He is insolubly linked to a situation that obliterates himself and his self-sufficiency resulting in his inability. At the end, he became defeated by the nature of imagination not capable

of controlling. By projecting such kind of androgyny, Quentin starts having a fixation for “the concept of its eternal punishment” (The Sound and the Fury, p.411).

4. Conclusion

The literary style of Joyce and Faulkner is highly experimental. Their complexity is entangled with the desire to retell their native stories perceived through the eyes of the overwhelmed and their literary cosmos, or their whole world apart, are a consequence to readopt their native spaces. This experimentation requires an obscurity of language, abandoning the linear technique of narration and exposition. This obscurity of style was in keeping with the intricacy of the subject, presented by the voice of marginalized and exploited. Modernist literary movement, in the late 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, changes the perception of the author imagination even the existence of the author itself. 20th century brought about radical changes in the society, one of them being the reconstruction of sexual categories. An androgyny imagination assisted male modernist writers, to find ways renovating artistic conceptions to adhere new cultural changes, whereas helped female modernist writers transforming their situation from object to subject active architect.

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