

Modernism's Rejection of Tradition through Literary Experimentation in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*

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Abstract

This paper examines literary experimentation in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925). Modernism's rejection of pre-modern tradition lies in literary experimentation. Before embarking on answering the question, I will introduce modern literary experimentation to derive the idea home. The core conceptual appropriation of modern literary experimentation with the novels' narrative structure which had emphasized the genuine artistic quality which corresponds to modernism's departing point from pre-modernism. This departure is the artist experimentation with the main narrative components of the novels. Therefore, modernism has offered a technical narrative analysis of this experimentation in literature, especially the novel. Artistic experimentation yields the necessity of exposing pre-modernism's literary decline and its possible amendment. Modern fiction relies on literary imitation of previous literary works in an almost similar manner. Modern fictional authors did not compose innovative literary forms so that they could not produce any literary genuineness. Such literary imitation has culminated in literary decline which limits the artistic creativity of fiction. In modernism, the proper agent to confront literary decline is the creative experimentation with fictional techniques to avoid such literary decline.

Key words: Experimentation; Fiction; Modernism; Narrative Structure, Stream of Consciousness

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INTRODUCTION

Modernism had come with radical literary experimentation. It enriched the inherited literary tradition due to its unprecedented literary innovation, especially in the fictional genres (Abu Jweid: 2020f, p.102). Therefore, the suggested technical experimentation has been the literary experimentation by which fictional authors can compose permanent fictional genres. Being so, modernism has contributed technical solutions to modernism's literary decline. Authors of fictional genres have executed modernism literary experimentation within their narrative fabrics. Modernism had accentuated the use of narrative experimentation to unravel the narrative novelty literature as a whole (Abu Jweid and Kaur, p.8). Accordingly, narrative experimentation had been reinforced in the light of the technical construction of the plot, narrator, and characters' discourse. In this regard, modernism contributes technical interpretation of these literary forms in the light of modernism fiction in general.

In addition, the issue of literary experimentation is also tackled in the light of modernism. Literary experimentation formulates the essence of his notion of modernism literature (Abu Jweid, 2020a, p.11). Modernism exposes the problem of literary decline in modern literature could be avoided through literary experimentation, or more precisely literary experimentation. Accordingly, modernism focuses on the literary experimentation through studying three technical elements in the novels (Attridge and Rosenquist, p.58). They are the plot, narrator, and the characters' discourse. Modernism's study of these techniques facilitates the study of fictional discourse in modernism fiction. In this sense, the fictional discourse is explored through the

authorial self-consciousness in the fictional events (Abu Jweid, 2020b, p.6). Authors expresses their notion of how creative fiction could be innovated. This notion is analysed through the main narrators' discourse. Being so, modernism attempts to provide novels with experimental techniques in order to depart from pre-modern ones from an experimental literary perspectives. This is because experimentation helps to illustrate the formal structure of the cyclical plot in modernism fiction (Abu Jweid, 2021a, 52). Therefore, the current paper attempts to study literary experimentation as a rejection of tradition in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925).

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Literary experimentation, therefore, is a conspicuous feature of modernism's rejection of inherited tradition via dealing with the intricate issues of freedom of expression, primitivism, and radicalism. Modernism departs from the previous literary conceptions by experimenting with new forms that represent the core spirit of its social and cultural background (Abu Jweid, 2021c, p.12). In, this essay, I will shed light on stream of consciousness as a blatant peculiarity of modern literary experimentation that addresses the inextricable relationship among freedom of expression, primitivism, and radicalism in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*. Hence, these novels tackle the core conceptualization insights of modernism as a literary movement that witnessed drastic cultural changes due to tremendous political negative hegemony and technological advancement. Therefore, the discussion will concentrate on the novels' appropriation of the fictional nexus of modernism by dint of their literary stream of conciseness.

James Joyce is a giant figure of controversy concerning the issue of freedom of expression. His *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is not hard reading, since he twists language to express dream states until the words seem at first unrecognizable by exposing the complex perception of man as a primitive creating developing into prosperity and cultural changes (Mickalites, p.83). His mastery of expression is notable, his portrayal of the characters' mentality has been profound because they are literary miniatures of radicalism that approaches the people's relative view of life. Furthermore, they incarnate the sense of radicalism and freedom of expression as they exemplify stream of conscious (Abu Jweid and GhadaSasa, p.339). That is, they perceive life according to their own evaluation of society around them through their minds. However, there are some factors that make us consider his choice and treatment of subject matter objectionable, especially by introducing experimental techniques, like authorial self-reflexivity that reveals his autobiographical insights in the context of the novel.

As for radicalism and primitivism, many of his characters are doomed by fate and by inescapable accident, which is an obvious thematic aspect of modernism as a literary movement. To explain, his characters are mere embodiments of the adherence of social and political reform (Gregory, p.49). This is the essence of their adoption of radicalism in their lives in order to get rid of the depressive military actions that devastated their hope to get peace and social order. Such chaotic radicalism is the premise of another characteristic of James's utilization of experimental stream of consciousness i.e., freedom of expression. Being so, He is a great master at creating a cultural background so haunting that it seems to take part as a character in the novel (Abu Jweid, p.534). The characters are controlled by the prevailing political mainstream that deprives them of expressing their needs. In other words, they are victims of deprivation as they are severely oppression and marginalized by the dominant politics; and, consequently, their voice is utterly muted. Joyce, therefore, shares this power to summon up actual places, though he varies his settings over the whole England that unravel the implication of freedom of speech. As such, the characters resort to their stream of conciseness to console themselves against the oppression political agents of the time.

By using modern experimental stream of consciousness, Joyce takes as his characters quiet, harmless, civilized characters, but he usually introduces some mysterious force – a hidden instinct, a weird or unexplained or supernatural phenomenon – that causes us to re-examine the basis of human life; this phenomenon is modernism's rejection of inherited tradition and adoption of new daring social and cultural norms. Accordingly, the novel is full of disturbing conflicts highlighted by the contrast between modern and pre-modern view of life regarding tradition via employing stream of consciousness as an experimental technique.

Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, on the other hand, utilizes stream of consciousness as an experimental technique as a modern literary form. This technique is another form of modernism' prose fiction that deals with radicalism freedom of expression, and primitivism. In this respect, she depends on this technique as a capacity fictional imagination which is allowed free rein (Abu Jweid, 2021d, p.6). This is achieved through imagined unusual situations that are strongly developed to extremes in order to prove some point, and sometimes great ingenuity is exercised to make dreams seem like reality by depicting the fictional characters internal thoughts. These thoughts are that incarnation of their primitive position. To explain, the female protagonist, Clarissa, is despondent; and she seems to be devoid of human morality. She are treated as an inferior creature. In this case, she summons up her thoughts to decide her destiny and life. In some cases, she decide to get rid of her sufferings by thinking over committing suicide. This is because she is thinks

that she is a "primitive" miserable women. In fact, such primitivism prevails the whole modern literary scenes as people suffered from pessimism and lack of ethics (Abu Jweid, 2021b, p.29). Therefore. Woolf's erudite use of stream of consciousness is but a striking proof of her exceptional portrayal of the characters' socio-cultural plights at the onset of a new era, which is modernism per se.

In modernism, moreover, stream of consciousness had always been a popular form of prose fiction that was almost perfected by Woolf's literary experimentation (Detloff, p.102). On that account, she gives us vivid pictures of literary actions and complex hairbreadth escapes are the important things, though, unlike the pre-modern literary traditions, characters and background may be developed convincingly throughout the novel's fictional context. In her meticulous depiction of radicalism, additionally, Woolf creates as fictional world as it is i.e., realistic fictional events that imitate the reality of the characters' radicalism. This is evident in her portrayal of real people and their imagined characteristics projected in the novel's plot; and these characters are brushing against other real people, which is the genuine depiction of radicalism. And this is the subject matter for the realistic attributes of the novel. For this reason, Woolf constructs her novel by writing a long story organized toward a significant conclusion and dealing with convincing, though imagined, people in their relations with one another (Abu Jweid, 2020e, p.207). In an ideal way, the novel must be well put together in its treatment of the characters' radicalism. That is, it is sorely realistic; and it gives an impressionistic literary picture of the modern social world as we might conceive it through the characters and the plot.

As for freedom of expression, Woolf is extremely perceptive of fine shades of feeling and of all the sensations of fictional characters. Her novel meticulously records stream of consciousness by dealing with the flow of her heroines' thoughts; though the novel is left open and inconclusive at the end, it is delicate in portraying the heroine's predilection to have a freedom of speech (Abu Jweid, 2020d, p.93). As such, she was the leading novelist in the stream of consciousness technique made popular after the war. Freedom of speech manifest in her novel because of its psychological insight into personality and its slow building up of real characters in fully developed situations. She introduces something new into English literature, mixing stream of consciousness and sentiment with many a whim and quirk. Her novel attacks social problems by means of scintillating conversations that are more like debates than the dialogue of the usual novel. Woolf, therefore, is subtle, witty, and balanced. If you want to test the qualities of a typical modern novel, take *Mrs. Dalloway* as a standard for this literary distinctive capacity (Caws and Luckhurst, p.114).

Woolf's great gist was her vitality in depicting freedom of expression and means of rejecting pre-modern traditions. She created whole worlds of characters, exaggerated but unforgettable (Abu Jweid, 2020c, p.15). She shows surpassing literary skill in revealing a complete panorama of society. Sometimes she proceeded by organizing it around a single female hero. She writes in an urbane manner about the foibles and vanities of the country gentlefolk and the civilized sets of London. Her novel reflects the tense atmosphere of such a society, being in tone a trifle weary and cynical. She also had the power to create complete social groups. She added to this power a moral fervor of her own and an ability to devise plots that almost equals modernism literary experimentation (Abu Jweid and Sasa, p.164). Moreover, she created the imaginary places that simulate the real English life during modernism; and she filled it with clergymen, farmers, politicians, sweet young women and fierce older ones – virgins, vixens, and viragos. She wrote in an experimental style that exploded in epigrams like fireworks. In spite of her mannered writing, she conveys to the reader her delight in the active social life.

CONCLUSION

This paper has studied literary experimentation in Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925). Literary realism came into prominence in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Scholars argue that the term fist the literary works that approach reality as it is. This means that realistic literary works do not incorporate fantastic elements in their plots. They perceive reality from precise fictional perspectives. That is, they depict, people, events and places as they are exist in reality. However, they approach reality through symbolism in order to comment or amend a certain issue in life. The characters and setting, in realistic fiction, resemble those in reality. They do not have additional or supernatural traits. They approach the problems of everyday life as they occur to people in their actual societies. Therefore, the selected works, therefore, portray these circumstances that led to the appearance of realism a literary movement a response to the First War advancement of industry, modernity and economics as the main motivations of literary realism.

Joyce and Woolf have one thing in common; they are willing to twist the experiences of the actual world, shape imaginary events, and exaggerate grotesquely in order to prove a point or hold our interest in literary actions. Both of them write about modernism's rejection of pre-modern traditions; and they strive for literary experimentation as a vehicle of exposing the defects of radicalism, primitivism and freedom of expression that had been prevalent in their entire contemporary cultural and social atmosphere. Thus, they depend on stream of consciousness and a means of

achieving this literary experimentation. The study of such experimentation aims at exploring the function of literary realism in the selected works.

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