

## **TIME AND MODERNISM: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PERCEPTION OF TIME IN ULYSSES AND THE SOUND AND THE FURY**

Dalila **Karakaçi**, Faculty of Foreign Languages, Luigj Gurakuqi University of Shkoder, [dalila.karakaci@unishk.edu.al](mailto:dalila.karakaci@unishk.edu.al)

Original scientific paper

DOI: 10.31902/flil.50.2025.6

UDC: 821.111-31.09

**Abstract:** This study aimed to explore the concept of time as presented by writers of the Modernist movement, focusing on an analysis of two modernist literary works- James Joyce's *Ulysses* and William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*. These two authors introduced innovative literary techniques in their works, stressing the experience of time in a chaotic world. Both Joyce and Faulkner imbued their literary characters with a sense of Bergson's and Einstein's thoughts on duration, where fantasy, memories, and various physical sensations of the human body find shelter in the present, at times narrowing and at other times expanding. The characters in *Ulysses* are in search of a mental solution to the experience of time. The present is a lost time and the past is a lost paradise, while the future is a search for a lost paradise. However in *The Sound and the Fury*, the characters' language is based on irregular associations and memories, moving from a spatial sense of time to chronological alignment. The souls of the individual characters are haunted by the passing of time. Faulkner organizes a spatial disorder in *The Sound and the Fury*. In this study, through a qualitative analysis, involving the use of narratology, the psychoanalytic literary criticism of Bergson and Einstein, and textual analysis, it was possible to convey the divergent modes of the modernist use of time. This analysis showed how Joyce and Faulkner employed time as a means of bringing order to the chaotic nature of modern life.

**Keywords:** time, modernism, Faulkner, Joyce, Bergson, chaotic world, *Ulysses*, *The Sound and the Fury*

### **1. Introduction: time from the modernist perspective**

For 19<sup>th</sup>-century novelists, time was a vehicle for humanity's growth and development along with its desires, hopes, and ambitions. Various events marked a change in traditional connotations of time.

Characterization was considered important for a literary work following its logical and linear exposition. The organization of a literary work was based on the causal nature of the plot and the interaction between the characters and their environment. These ideas, on the treatment of time, are neglected in the modernist novel. According to Bergson, events are imaginary points of time in the continuous flow of time (2001 [1910]; 142). In many modernist works, instruments used to measure time become worthless, for example, the compass in Faulkner's *The Bear*<sup>1</sup> (1942), and the clock on the fireplace in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*<sup>2</sup> (1925). Modernists eschew logical sequences in favor of spatial form.

Bergson's theory of time and consciousness made an important contribution to modernist notions of narrative. For him, time measured with clocks, calendars, and so on differs from time as experienced by the consciousness. Subjective consciousness helps us perceive time as it really is. Bergson refers to time as duration because it is based on continuum where the past and present merge. The human mind can understand the function of time only by measuring it through regular instruments, turning the time of duration into time measured by standards. In line with Bergson, "time only exists as duration and the clock the convenient but inadequate means by which a mechanistic world conceives and represents it" (Parsons, 2007; 111). The theory of duration is related to another idea of his, that of memory. Based on analyzing measured time and real time, he concluded that there are two diverse types of memory: unconscious memory, not accompanied by images, appears in moments of intuition or dreams which is called "pure memory" (Bergson, 2001 [1910]; 187); when the mind consciously repeats scenes of a previous event, or of a previous experience, it is called "habit memory" (Bergson, *ibid*; 187). *Pure* memory is spontaneous and continuous, while *habit* is automatic and broken into segments of observable instances. Duration is based on "pure" memory. Bergson's concept of time redefined humanity's ideas of existence, prioritizing time over space, the unconscious and continuous duration of consciousness.

---

<sup>1</sup> In the novel, a young boy who is hunting a bear in the woods carries with himself elements of civilization such as a compass and a gun- a compass can use the direction of the sun to keep track of time.

<sup>2</sup> Time becomes an important metaphor in the novel. Gatsby expresses the desire to return to a happier time. There is a hopelessness in his aim to reverse the past.

A writer who contributed to a new perception of time was Marcel Proust with his novel *In Search of Lost Time*<sup>3</sup> (1913-1927). Proust grounds his work within the connotations of the mind, turning it into an analysis of the mental experience of time. His novel is based on a subjective experience of memory and time. Bergson goes further when he claims that his theories on the space/time relationship in the mind influenced Einstein's theories. Einstein's theories showed that the space/time relationship was inseparable as an interaction of a three-dimensional space with a fourth element, time. This intertwining builds the physical theory of the universe. Innovations made by these 20<sup>th</sup>-century intellectuals were used by modernist writers, of the 1920s-1930s, supporting the aesthetic rejection of traditional novelistic conventions regarding narrative chronology, the omniscient narrator, and external plot.

This article comprises a qualitative analysis of Joyce's *Ulysses* and Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*. When analysing the narrative structures of the two novels, it is possible to evaluate modernist aesthetics in general, and the various forms of time exposition created by James Joyce, William Faulkner, and other modernist authors. Through a textual analysis of the two novels, a narratological interpretation, and the psychoanalytic literary criticism of the theories of Bergson and Einstein, it is possible to evaluate the various forms of time presented by these authors a means of bringing order to the chaotic nature of modern life. Denzin et al (2023) argue that scholars can question the significance of texts through reading books. A detailed analysis of the texts written by Joyce and Faulkner facilitates a comparison of the ways in which time is exploited, as informed by the

---

<sup>3</sup> Describing the importance of the *In Search of a Lost Time* and its themes, Roger Shattuck (1982; 6) suggests the following: „Thus, the novel embodies and manifests the principle of intermittent: to live means to perceive different and often conflicting aspects of reality. This iridescence never resolves itself completely into a unitive point of view. Accordingly, it is possible to project out of the *Search* itself a series of putative and intermittent authors ... The portraitist of an expiring society, the artist of romantic reminiscence, the narrator of the laminated "I," the classicist of formal structure—all these figures are to be found in Proust.

The novel is about the loss of time, innocence, meaningless companionship and love, human pride and the victory of immorality, and misery. The author ultimately finds that daily life is significant, beset with moral delight and beauty, which may be abiding and recoverable despite being lost.”

theories of Bergson and Einstein. Furthermore, a study of the narrative structures employed by the modernist authors mentioned, using a narratological methodology, and the way in which they modify the display of modernist techniques are discussed. With regard to narratology, White suggests that, “far from being one code among many that a culture may utilize for endowing experience with meaning, narrative is a meta-code, a human universal on the basis of which transcultural messages about the nature of a shared reality can be transmitted” (2023; 1). A detailed analysis of the texts written by the two novelists facilitates a comparison of the types of time utilized.

This study developed the relevant literature by analysing the theme of time in relation to modern aesthetics. By focusing on the narrative structures of *Ulysses* and *The Sound and the Fury*, it is possible to evaluate modernist aesthetics in general, and the various forms of time presented by Joyce, and Faulkner. The aim of this article is to analyze the function of time in *Ulysses* and *The Sound and the Fury* through the relevant characters of both literary works, as well as determine its impact on the chaotic world of the macro cosmos and microcosmos of Dublin and the American South.

## 2. Literary Review: Complexity in the narrative style

As modernist novels, *Ulysses* (1922) and *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) are characterized by a complexity in their narrative style. The purpose of modernist writers, including Joyce and Faulkner, is more mimetic than diegetic. Therefore, the reader has more freedom to draw their own conclusions about events and characters. These writers envision an endless, chaotic world where individuals try to adapt to an unusual relationship with modern humanity. This bond produces alterations in the inner life of the characters that appear in distinct ways. Consequently, they are immersed in an interweaving of time (present, past and future), symbols, and myths through a language that mingles words and images.

Avoiding a linear exposition, time association in the plot of *The Sound and the Fury* is more specific. The interweaving of time (past, present and future) presents formal difficulties to a mass readership. Events from different time periods seem to occur simultaneously. Action time and narrative time are compressed. Time passes but the characters are unaware of it. They are trapped in the past, without the will to live in the present or the future. Every fragment of memory in Benjy’s, Quentin’s, and Jason’s interior monologue is related to their sister, Caddy. The three brothers wonder about her escape and overwhelm themselves with moments associated with her. The reader may notice

that the climax of the situation occurs before the narrated time. Therefore, the Compson brothers live most in the past, reasoning with the opportunity they lost. Caddy's disappearance does not allow them to inhabit the present while planning for the future.

The characters of *Ulysses* seek mental training on the experience of time. They want to improve themselves, immortalize certain moments from a happy past, aspiring to be more promising than in the present. Molly and Leopold Bloom are nostalgic about the past. The present is a lost time and the past is a lost paradise, while the future is a search for a lost paradise. For Mircea Iliade, this book is "fed with a nostalgia for the myth of eternal repetitions and the disappearance of time" (1954; 153). Events are cyclical and illogical, narrowing, as Faulkner does, narrated time and action time. Hence, character's experiences are shaped into temporal patterns

Sherwood Anderson's use of time is unique, with the present, past, and future intertwining as in a dream. He points out that the real story of life consists of a story of moments made together, only at special instants are we allowed to live (quoted in High, 1999; 51). Characters act in a climate of irrationality. In contrast to Anderson, Hemingway and Fitzgerald combine symbolism with psychological realism. Hemingway's style aims to convey the most content through the most compressed language, so the reader supplies the emotions and reasons for the fictional experiences and their significance. Hemingway, Dos Passos, and Faulkner employ a direct emotionless style with sounds and smells. Dos Passos portrays the complexity of modernism when he says: "everyone has been damaged by the modern experience" (quoted in High, 1999; 51). Modern society is characterized by meaning that does not convey meaning, but rather the loss of it, which is the *modern state* of living.

For Lukács (1978), the modernist novel offered a way to understand historical contingency by presenting human's interaction with the objective world. He argues that when this dialectical vision is set aside, the narrative loses its dynamic quality, focusing on the plot/subject or object. The novel becomes static, motionless, and the action focusses more on the person's unconsciousness. These elements are reflected in detached scenes and present human lives as static and hermetic. The traditional omniscient narrator provided the reader with comprehensive information about the action. The modernist writer, through the present tense and experimental viewpoints, gets caught up in a flow of emotions, memories, and sensations. Lukács thought that modernist experiments were dangerous because they undermined the importance and transformative power of human action (ibid; 110-148).

Frederick Jameson believed that novelists, poets, and critics “have stopped writing about time” (2003; 695). For the modernist novelists, time was a special theme in their narrative. Walter Benjamin emphasized that during modernism “Experience in the sense of skills developed over a long period of time, is replaced by one that is expressed through immediate sensations” (1969; 163). This technique is observed in many modern authors such as Gertrude Stein. Since there was not a real unity in the literary work, the focus was on the elements of experience through sensation. This meant a dissolution of the plot, characters, and the mime. She used the present continuous in her works *Three Lives* (1909) and *To Be American* (1925), as the characters lived in an extended present. Influenced by cubist paintings and the sense of the future in Henry James’s works, Stein moved towards the elements of abstraction in her narrative. She tried to replace the past tense of the narrative with the present continuous, using spatial form and displacement and exposing verbal cubism. Grahn argues that rather than “the emotional manipulation that is a characteristic of linear writing, Stein uses *play*” (1989; 18). *Sweet Stamps* (1913) consists of short prose lyrics, underlining word coordination, rejecting traditional novelistic form. The purpose was to transform time and historical perspectives into spatial structures.

### 3. The perception of time in *Ulysses*

While trying to analyze the differences between the traditional novel and the modernist novel of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Samuel Beckett claims that “the new artist of the word has recognized the autonomy of the language and aware of the 20<sup>th</sup> century’s current towards universality, attempts to hammer out a verbal vision that destroys time and space” (1972; 79). This definition conveys the collapse of the traditional relationship between the literary text and the author. The text in the modernist novel is composed of unique styles acquiring independence from the author. As experimental works, they reveal the artistic autonomy of the creative process. While attitudes towards human consciousness were changing in the light of new developments in all study fields, the literary world was inspired by the theories of Freud, Bergson, William James, etc. Einstein and Bergson were two thinkers who influenced the development of the modernist novel in its treatment of time, simultaneously reflecting the 20<sup>th</sup>-century modernist understanding of consciousness. In the writing of *Ulysses*, Joyce was guided by Einstein’s Theory of Relativity.

In contrast to the traditional novel, where the passage of time is based on a logical sequence of events, in the modernist novel, time is

marked as an experience occurring in the mind of the characters. A typical example of this narrative technique is found in Joyce's *Ulysses*, with the reader following the experiences and sensations occurring in the characters' minds during a single day in Dublin. The story is based on the main characters' subjective experience of time. In an era of investigation and research on human existence and the source of quotidian phenomena, the universality of space and time was questioned by innovative theories in the field of Psychology, Physics, and so on. The same theories were reflected in the literary field, with modernist writers expressing their uncertainties about consciousness and the concept of time. Virginia Woolf's description of the modernist novel and the method used to express time and consciousness, captures contemporary thoughts and discussion about this problem. She describes the entire process as "a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end" (quoted in McNeille, 108).

Many critics consider Bergson's theories on time and space as precursors to Einstein's treatment of time. Einstein's theory ruled out the then-established thought that man could have certain knowledge of time and space. He conceived time and space as interacting with each other. Space is built on a three-dimensional spatial system, attached to a fourth temporal system. In one of his speeches, Herman Mikovski explains this innovative linking of time and space: "Henceforth space by itself, and time by itself, are doomed to fade away into mere shadows, and only a kind of union of the two will preserve an independent reality" (quoted in Lorenz et al, 1954; 75). For Einstein, the experience of time varies depending on its observer, meaning that universality is detached from time measurements. Matter makes space refraction possible. Specific conditions make observable facts possible. Even though it is theoretical physics, it influenced other fields of study. This development attracted the attention of modernist writers, who made Einstein's ideas on the universe their own. In addition to Woolf, and Dorothy Richardson, Joyce's *Ulysses* incorporates this theory of the universe.

In the Dublin of *Ulysses*, the fragments of people's lives during a single day are transmitted using the film montage technique. In the tenth episode, events and individuals from the novel are combined in nineteen scenes based on spatial and temporal contemporaneity. Atypical events take place in various places, but at the same time. The actions transpire in time and space simultaneously, rejecting the traditional opinion that time and space are solid and immutable. Many actions occur simultaneously. For these actions, Einstein thought it was impossible to determine where to start making a comparison. A

comparison could be made in terms of arbitrary structure as, unlike for observers, the simultaneity of actions is changed. From one episode to the next, numerous interludes appear, as the author does not explain what is happening in terms of the characters or the action, leaving it to the reader to connect fragments and establish meaning. The simultaneity of actions is achieved by means of numerous incidents. With a diachronic connection, the reader becomes part of an eternal present. This motif allows for the simultaneity of actions. Examples of events from contrasting times, united by simultaneity, are numerous.

Joyce uses space and time as a way of bringing order to the chaotic nature of modern life, despite providing temporal information in these and other episodes. Conmee's clock strikes "three minutes to five" (Joyce, 1961; 219), in the "Siren" episode, Bloom tells the time in the pub it is "four to five" (ibid; 173), thinking people's watches are not accurate and usually five minutes fast. In "Penelope", Molly gives the time, reminding herself that at "a quarter to three" (ibid; 747), she threw a coin to the sailor. In this same episode, Boylan decides to send Molly a gift, but the specific time at which he does so is made clear to the reader through other characters, for example, M'Coy reminds us that such a gift can be sent a little "well after three" (ibid; 233). These simultaneous actions show the time and transmit an element of realism in relation to the tenth episode of the novel, emphasizing that there is no internal distortion compared to the others, such as that of "Ithaca" and "Cyclops". The ten events in the episode create temporal relationships. As if to confirm this thesis, as Joyce sent letters to his friend Frank Budgen about the writing process of *Ulysses*, the latter stated that Joyce "wrote the Wandering Rocks with a map of Dublin before him on which were traced in red ink the paths of the Earl of Dudley and Father Conmee. He calculated to a minute the time necessary for his characters to cover a given distance of the city" (124-215).

The narrative technique employed in "Cyclops", is the first person. In this episode, two actions related to the act of urination appear. Two parallel actions intertwine, creating an atmosphere of ambiguity. The action's purpose is to express the dual time of the novel with an ambiguous tense. The scene is contextualized for the reader. The entire episode is marked by a lack of uniformity in space and time, serving in the entire novel to emphasize the division of different scenes and the avoidance of a coherent, logical narrative line. The events of "Cyclops" create tension due to many effects aiming to break the rhythmic elements in a stationary environment. The use of temporal dichotomy

serves to add tension to the events, expanding the various events within the narrative.

In “Ithaca”, Joyce posits a modernist existence based on Einstein’s ideas of a universe with a mathematical, physical, astronomical, mechanical, chemical, and geometric structure articulated by Stephen and Bloom. The theory of relativity questioned the very nature of human existence, its role in history and collective memory. In one of his accounts of writing “Ithaca”, Joyce explained to Budgen:

I am writing Ithaca in the form of catechism...all mathematical events arise in cosmic, psychic physics. Interesting so that not only will the reader know everything and know it in the most direct way, but therefore, Bloom, Stephen turns into divine bodies turning the stars to which they insist on (quoted in Gilbert, 1966; 161).

In “Ithaca”, Joyce’s desire to change time, narrative technique, and the novel’s styles introducing new approaches to novel-writing is brought into reality. Pursuing this approach, Joyce also links the three main characters of the novel to the mathematical language of tangents and vectors, Bloom, in particular, has a signature expression that reveals much about his personality. As a humanist he thinks of “scintillating uncondensed milky way, discernible by daylight by an observer placed at the lower end of a cylindrical vertical” (Joyce, 1961; 698). In *Ulysses*, the actions move between space, antiquity, and modernity. The end of “Ithaca” and “Circe” are based on a pantomime. Meanwhile, in the last episode of the novel, where the story of *Ulysses* ends, Bloom is transformed into a symbol of the possibilities of humanity, while Molly symbolizes the earth, Gea. At the end of the novel, as a conclusion, two questions are asked: Where? and When? requiring the answer of our characters, while expressing a concern about the effect of time and space. The end of the conversation ends with a dot. The answer to the question Where? is just a dot. If analyzed in the context of spatial-temporal interpretation, such a response implies Bloom’s withdrawal in the lair of time, as a means of generating and gaining strength to continue the pace in the days ahead.

When?

Going to dark bed there was a square round Sinbad the Sailor roc’s auk’s egg in the night of the bed of all the auks of the rocs of Darkinbad the Brightdayler.

Where? (Joyce, 1961; 731)

Theories about the universe and humanity's position in it together with life dilemmas are debated in this section. By means of the question and answer technique, Joyce presents Bloom and Stephen's impasses, each judging the other's answers by delving into their explanations while questioning discoveries in the fields of mathematics, and physical, human, and astronomical evolution. Avoiding interior monologue and focusing on an impartial narration of the role of the person addressing questions, gives the whole episode an objective aura, both earthly and heavenly. The whole piece moves from a dualism between the macrocosmic and microcosmic, from the universe as macrocosm and issues pertaining to the human being to Bloom and Stephen's microcosm of the streets of Dublin in their ordinary activities at home. The whole discussion between Stephen and Bloom is based on the search for and possibility of explaining the origin of humanity's existence. Bloom suggests a collision, starting from his conjectures about recent theories in geology, cosmology, evolution, and astronomy. As he explains the star system to Stephen, he lingers on the time/space approach to the infinite nature of the universe:

Meditations of evolution increasingly vaster: of the moon invisible in incipient lunation, approaching perigee: of the infinite lattiginous scintillating uncondensed milky way, discernible by daylight by an observer placed at the lower end of a cylindrical vertical shaft 5000 ft deep sunk from the surface towards the centre of the earth: of Sirius (alpha in Canis Maior) 10 lightyears (57,000,000,000,000 miles) distant and in volume 900 times the dimension of our planet: of Arcturus: of the precession of equinoxes: of Orion with belt and sextuple sun theta and nebula in which 100 of our solar systems could be contained...(Joyce, 1961; 688).

After this rationalization, he dwells on another exhausting, nonsensical elucidation of the planet's genesis and the species populating it:

Of the eons of geological periods recorded in the stratifications of the earth: of the myriad minute entomological organic existences concealed in cavities of the earth, beneath removable stones, in hives and mounds, of microbes, germs, bacteria, bacilli, spermatozoa: of the incalculable trillions of billions of millions of imperceptible molecules contained by cohesion of molecular affinity in a single pinhead...(ibid; 689).

In the conclusion, Bloom draws about the past, present, and the infinite, a typical myriad can be observed that is reminiscent of Einstein's gravitational universe:

That it was not a heaventree, not a heavengrot, not a heavenbeast, not a heavenman. That it was a Utopia, there being no known method from the known to the unknown: an infinity renderable equally finite by the suppositious apposition of one or more bodies equally of the same and of different magnitudes: a mobility of illusory forms immobilised in space, remobilised in air: a past which possibly had ceased to exist as a present before its probable spectators had entered actual present existence (ibid; 691).

These are Bloom's concluding, utopian thoughts.

Human existence and humans themselves can be doubted, but not denied by the theory of reality articulated by Bloom. If Stephen moves in his intellectual search from the known to the unknown, between a microcosm and a macrocosm, Bloom does the opposite, moving from the unknown to the known. Throughout the episode based on questions and answers, Bloom shows faith in the meaning of life. While trying to manage himself within the everyday microcosm, Bloom illustrates the arduous relationship of humanity with its environment. Based on the observation of the vast sky, Bloom notes that it takes many years for a star, after releasing its light, to reach the right destination to be easily perceived from the Earth. Richardson's thoughts on infinite multidimensional time and space, constituting a way to give more room to the consciousness, are cognate with Bloom's thoughts. She thought of creating a metaphor according to Einstein's theory that a human, considering himself an infinitely small space traveler, is "able to move forward, travel, faster than light, no matter how wide the distances are, because the cosmos, no matter how wide it may be, remains too small to imprison your consciousness, and however complex things may be, you can run past them and reach a region, perhaps a center... from which it comes or flows or radiates, whatever you call it, it sets things in motion..." (quoted in Fromm, 1995; 549).

#### **4. The perception of time in *The Sound and the Fury***

A human's existence and his personality challenge the unreal universe. Modernist writers are united in their adoption of Bergson's theory on duration and pure memory, in expressing the possibilities of time-spacing and the many unlimited relationships of individual consciousness. The language of Faulkner's characters consists of

irregular associations and memories, from a spatial sense of time to chronological alignment. Individuals are haunted by the passing of time. The association of memory with time was influenced by Bergson's notions on time, and Faulkner's treatment of time was shaped by these ideas. Bergson, from the earliest of his works, believed in the driving force of the unfavorable, which he thought existed in everyone (2001 [1910]; 95). Self-discovery is achieved by analyzing one's own memories, focusing the attention on the flow of time. He believed that humanity's greatest miscarriage was to fail to conceive the relationship between time and the individual and other factors, while thinking of it as a continuum. None of Faulkner's characters have the intelligence to understand human development, or life fluidity, to gain knowledge about themselves and the will. Benjy's mental disorder does not provide him with the competence to understand the passage of time. Quentin is haunted by a will to put an end to this transition, focusing on one segment of time, in the future of imaginary desires, bypassing all contact with the past. Although Dilsey seems to be the only character in the novel aware of the linear development of time, she remains limited in this respect, perceiving it from a religious viewpoint. If we are to search for an experience, according to Bergson's theory, regarding Dilsey, we will experience it in the religious community, in the scene with the priest Shegog.

We can correlate the analyses of Benjy with Bergson's research on children, whose problems are like his own. During a five-year study, Bergson reached "all literature devoted to memory and the psychological phenomenon of aphasia, the lack of use of language. According to theories of the period on motor psychology, brain damage affecting speech must also affect the main psychological power of the whole brain" (ibid; 234). Contrary to this statement, Bergson believed that an individual suffering from such an injury "understands what other people say and what he himself want to say, does not suffer from a paralyzes of any speech organ and still remains unable to speak" (Encyclopedia Britannica 30). Disorganization of time is a more sensitive issue in the modernist novel than the spatial one, but a latter approach becomes complex due to modernist narrative structure, as in the case of stream of consciousness. Time disorder arises from a certain action in Benjy's mind, such as hanging clothes on a nail. While hunting, like many other members of the Compson family with memories of Caddy, he recalls a moment when

Caddy uncaught me and we crawled through. Uncle Mary said to not let anybody see us, so we better stoop over, Caddy said. Stoop over, Benjy. Like this, see. We stooped over and

crossed the garden, where the flowers rasped and rattled against us. The ground was hard (Faulkner, 1990; 3).

These examples where the action in the present produces memories related to the past are numerous. The reader seems to travel in time, from the present to the past and vice versa. From a narrative perspective, the “time of events” in the traditional novel merges with the “time of discourse” typical of its modernist counterpart (Genett, 1990; 33). We can also find this similarity in Joyce. According to Anthony Giddens’s definition, this desire to play with time, found in Joyce and Faulkner, is called “the emptying of time”, and as a typical modernist technique, it was also enhanced by the impact of Bergson’s theories about time and memory (2001 [1910]; 18). Jean Paul Sartre, in his study on *The Sound and the Fury*, states that “the past takes on a sort of super-reality; its contours are hard and clear, unchangeable. The present, nameless are fleeting, is helpless before it” (quoted in Giddens, 1990; 18).

In the passage cited, it is possible to perceive a development in chronological time by placing all the events in a certain year, 1898. In Benjy’s mind, it is impossible to create a spatial designation for the events. His mental disorder is the reason he is incapable of chronologically ordering all the actions happening at once. Benjy is involved in a spatial stalemate producing emotional turmoil in his mind regarding memories of Caddy. Such an impasse has been described as a “spatial emptiness”, (Giddens, *ibid*; 19) typical of modernist narrative navigation, losing the connection between space and the designation of a certain region or place.<sup>4</sup> The reader is placed at the center of this regulation, and it is their task to collect the images and temporal and spatial fragments through the characters’ unconsciousness to give shape and meaning to the story of the novel. If the action takes place in the person’s consciousness, for example Benjy’s, it becomes impossible to build a spatial perception in the tale. In Benjy’s section, the spatial perception is reached in his psyche with key words as points of orientation facilitating the transmission of meaning to the reader.

Like Joyce’s fiction, Faulkner’s has been classified as post-colonial literature. This literature tried to remap and occupy spaces that had been appropriated by colonial systems, with spatial disorder at its

---

<sup>4</sup> Giddens explains that in the progressive charting of the world that led to the creation of universal maps, perspective played a minor role in the representation of geographic positions and forms, where space was defined as independent of a country or region.

foundation (Said, 1994; 210). As defined by Billy Ashcroft *et al*, post-colonial literature often tries to “negotiate a gap between worlds, a gap in which the simultaneous process of abrogation and appropriation constantly strive to define and establish their practice” (1989; 38). To escape this practice, writers try to alienate space by repopulating it and turning it into a living environment. In contrast, Faulkner experiences these spaces with human beings who find in it only loss and failure. Therefore, the pursuit of spaces is achieved through primitivist colonialist rulers’ ideas. What concerns these novelists is the lack of accurate orientation coordinates on a map for controlling any type of space and object.

Dilsey’s perception of time differs from that of the three Compson brothers. Her temporal worldview exists within a religious context, just like her existence. Her attitudes and actions throughout the novel are in stark contrast to those of the Compson family, but her presence threatens stability and order, which is even reflected in her perspective of time. She is one of the realistic voices in the novel due to her accepting reality as it is. Consequently, her experience of time is the most truthful. Throughout the novel, in contrast to the Compson brothers, she is the only one who reminds us of a linear time passage as a natural phenomenon of everyday life.

On the wall above a cupboard, invisible save at night, by lamp light and even then evincing an enigmatic profundity because it had but one hand, a cabinet clock ticked, then with preliminary sound as if it had cleared its throat, struck five times. “Eight o’clock,” Dilsey said (Faulkner, 1990; 342).

Dilsey experiences time in its fullest sense, in contrast to the Compson brothers, of whom Quentin lives in the past and cannot cope with its chronological aspect, as Jason exists only for the triumphant future, and Benjy occupies an inconceivable spatial dimension. Since Dilsey faces life in a religious context, even her experience of time takes on this meaning, incorporating shades of eternity as the Christian faith resistance symbol, Christ, is an example of overcoming time. Time contains elements of eternity. This sense contradicts the mindset presented in the novel by the Compson brothers, considering time as a source of destruction, decay, or renewal.

To analyze Quentin’s relationship with time, one passage is particularly revealing. While he is looking at the window of a store in which different watches are displayed, he compares them to his own watch: “a dozen different hours and each with the same assertive and contradictory assurance that mine had, without any hands at all.

Contradicting one another” (Faulkner, *ibid*; 358). This perspective frees him from temporal conditioning, bringing ignorance and perception at will. Trapped in a mid-nineteenth-century mindset that did not exist in the new ideology of the American South after the Civil War, he must establish control over time. The desire to control it turns into mental persecution in its pursuit. The action causes an opposite reaction in Quentin when he realizes that time has constricted him within strict rules. At this moment, Quentin rejects the control imposed by the linear progression of life events. By breaking the hands of a clock, a gift he receives from his father, he expresses a determination to escape any imprisonment instigated by temporal control. This damage to the clock occurred a long time ago, and it is a symbol of family inheritance passing from generation to generation and reminding him mostly of his social, cultural, and historical inheritance.

There is a part of Quentin seeking to maintain ties with the existential fluidity of time. During college life and cohabitation with his friend Gerald Butler, this desire can be observed in his unconsciousness, occasionally reflected while watching a trout in the Charles River. The symbolism this trout generates in Quentin’s mind is like time in Bergson’s view. With the flow of time, this trout during its course quickly grabs something, then returns to its normal position. Quentin is fascinated as the trout calmly navigates the stream showing complete control over its being. This is a control that Quentin does not attain but is driven by a desire to do so. Unfortunately, his smooth sailing in the stream, no longer of time but of the river, is achieved at the last moment of his episode when committing suicide while drowning in the stream he could not have, but finally controlling his existence, ironically through death.

Another part of Quentin seeks the opposite of temporal fluidity. That fragment of consciousness inextricably linked to the nineteenth-century tradition requires the temporal denial of absolutism in life, an idealism imposed by this convention. Quentin lived with it and has not recovered. As Senford Pinsker suggests Quentin “decides to replace an existential flux with an artificial permanence” (1998; 119), creating a dual reality aiming towards spiritual eternity. This is his utopia. This reality can only be suitable for families like the Compson, who have remained complicit in an idealization of an enlightened past and cannot escape it while the entire system of values they believed in has already collapsed. Avoiding the new reality, not projecting the future, but clinging to the past, turns into a destructive stream, resulting in his suicide.

#### 4. Conclusions: Joyce and Faulkner

Joyce and Faulkner, modernist authors who introduced innovative literary techniques in their fiction, both neglected the causal relationship and the interaction of individuals with their surrounding environment. An endlessly chaotic world is envisioned by the characters in *Ulysses* and *The Sound and the Fury* as they try to adapt to contemporary relation with *avant-garde* humankind. Joyce and Faulkner used time and space as a means of bringing order to this chaotic world.

In "Ithaca", Joyce presents the modern existence based on Einstein's ideas of a universe with a mathematical, physical, astronomical, mechanical, chemical, and geometric structure. Theories about the universe and humanity's position in it together with life's dilemmas are debated. The language of Faulkner's characters consists of irregular associations and memories, from a spatial sense of time to chronological alignment. Contrary to Joyce, none of Faulkner's characters have the intelligence to understand human development, or the fluidity of life, to gain self-knowledge and exercise the will. The disorganization of time is a more sensitive issue in the modernist novel than the spatial one. The latter approach becomes complex due to modernist narrative structure, as in the case of stream of consciousness as used by Joyce and Faulkner. The "time of events" in the traditional novel merges with the "time of discourse".

Faulkner presents a spatial disorder in *The Sound and the Fury*. All the characters take a singular approach to spatial meaning, each describing their experience of memory in numerous conditions. This spatial perspective is attained through stream of consciousness. Despite the purported influence of Joyce, Faulkner managed to distinguish himself in his deployment of this narrative technique. Both Joyce and Faulkner supply their characters with a Bergsonian perspective on duration through which fantasy, memories, and various physical sensations of the human body find shelter in the present, at times narrowing and at other times expanding. Unlike the other Compson brothers, Benjy's mental disorder transforms time elements into space in his section. Unlike Faulkner, Joyce never connected temporal emptiness with spatial emptiness. In *Ulysses*, Joyce pays careful attention to spatial projection. While writing in his letters about the narrative techniques used in *Ulysses* and aspects of the work in general, he stated that if Dublin were to be destroyed for some reason, every detail could be reconstructed from that city, simply by reading his work, filled with detailed elements about spatial construction (Gilbert, 1966; 97). In contrast to *Ulysses*, in *The Sound and the Fury*, stream of

consciousness is used to disrupt not only the chronological approach to time, but also the spatial one, as individual experience cannot be presented by clear spatial reference points.

### Works cited:

- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Black: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures*. London: Routledge, 1989. Print.
- Becket, Samuel. *Our examination Round his Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress*. Faber, 1972.
- Benjamin, Walter. "The Storyteller: Reflections on the work of Nikolai Leskov." *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*. Schocken, New York: Schocken, 1969.
- Bergson, Henry. *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*. New York: Dover, ((1910) (2001)).
- . *Matter and Memory*. New York: Dover, ((1910) (2001)).
- Budgen, Frank. *James Joyce and the Making of "Ulysses" and other Writings*. Thames and Hudson, 1974.
- Denzin, Norman K, Yvonna S. Lincoln, Michael Donald Giardina, and Gaile S. Cannella (eds). *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 6<sup>th</sup> edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2023.
- Faulkner, William. *Absolom! Absolom!* New York: Randon House, 1986.
- . *The Bear*. Applewood Books, 2016.
- . *The Sound and the Fury*. New York: Vintage International, 1990.
- Fitzgerald, Scott F. *The Great Gatsby*. Scribner, 2004.
- Fromm, Glorian Glikin. *Windows on Modernism: Selected Letters of Dorothy Richardson*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995.
- Genett, Gerard. *Narrative Discourse*. USA: Cornwall University, 1990.
- Giddens, Anthony. *The Consequences of Modernity*. California: Stanford University Press, 1990.
- Gilbert, Stuart (ed). *Letters of James Joyce*. 1vol. London: Faber, 1966.
- Grahn, Judy, ed. *Really Reading Gertrude Stein: A Selected Anthology with Essays by Judy Grahn*. Crossing Press, 1989.
- "Henri Bergson (Loius)". *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*. 15<sup>th</sup> edition, vol. 2 Chicago, 1989.
- High, Peter B. *An Outline of American Literature*. Longman, 1999.
- Iliade, Mirceada. *The Myth of Eternal Return*. New York: Dover, 1954.
- Jameson, F. "The End of Temporality." *Critical Inquiry* no.29, (2003): 695.
- Joyce, James. *Ulysses*. New York: Random House, 1961.
- Lorenz, Hendrik, et al. *The Principle of Relativity: A Collection of Original Memoirs on the Special and General Theory of Relativity*. New York: Dover Press, 1954.
- Lukacs, George. "Narrate or Describe." *Writer and Critic and Other Essays*. Ed. Arthur Kahn. London: Merlin, 1978, p.110-148.
- Mann, Thomas. *The Magic Mountain*. Translated by Richard E. Woods, Vintage; rare leather and gold bound Franklin edition, 1996.

- McNeille, Andrew (ed.). *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*. 4 vols. London: Hogarth Press, 1986-94.
- Parsons, Deborah. *Theorists of the Modernist Novel*. New York: Routledge, 2007.
- Pinsker, Sanford. "Squaring the Circle in the Sound and the Fury." *Corey*, 1998.
- Proust, Marcel. *In Search of a Lost Time*. Translated by Arthur Goldhammer, Liveright; Illustrated edition, 2019.
- Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994.
- Shattuck, Roger. *Marcel Proust*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982.
- Stein, Gertrude. *Three Lives*. Xist Classics, 2015.
- White, Hayden. *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1990.

### ILTEMPO E IL MODERNISMO: UN'ANALISI CRITICA DELLA PERCEZIONE DEL TEMPO IN *ULISSE* E *L'URLO E IL FURORE*

Questo studio mirava a esplorare il concetto di tempo presentato dagli scrittori del movimento modernista, concentrandosi sull'analisi di due opere letterarie moderniste: *Ulisse* di James Joyce e *L'Urlo e il Furore* di William Faulkner. Questi due autori hanno introdotto nelle loro opere tecniche letterarie innovative, sottolineando l'esperienza del tempo in un mondo caotico. Sia Joyce che Faulkner hanno permeato i loro personaggi letterari con il senso delle riflessioni di Bergson ed Einstein sulla durata, dove la fantasia, i ricordi e le varie sensazioni fisiche del corpo umano trovano rifugio nel presente, a volte restringendosi e altre volte espandendosi. I personaggi dell'*Ulisse* sono alla ricerca di una soluzione mentale all'esperienza del tempo. Il presente è un tempo perduto e il passato è un paradiso perduto, mentre il futuro è la ricerca di un paradiso perduto. Tuttavia in *L'Urlo e il Furore*, il linguaggio dei personaggi si basa su associazioni e ricordi irregolari, passando da un senso spaziale del tempo all'allineamento cronologico. L'animo dei singoli personaggi è tormentato dal passare del tempo. Faulkner organizza un disordine spaziale in *L'urlo e il Furore*. In questo studio, attraverso un'analisi qualitativa, come l'uso della narratologia, della critica letteraria psicoanalitica di Bergson ed Einstein e dell'analisi testuale, è stato possibile trasmettere le modalità divergenti dell'uso modernista del tempo. Questa analisi ha mostrato come Joyce e Faulkner abbiano utilizzato il tempo come mezzo per portare ordine nella natura caotica della vita moderna.

**Parole chiave:** modernismo, il tempo, Faulkner, Joyce, Bergson, mondo