

The Characters' Dilemma in Modernist Literature: Originality, Intertextuality and Hybrid Characterization in James Joyce's Ulysses and A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

معضلة الشخصيات في الأدب الحداثي بين
الأصالة والتناص والهجنة : قراءة في يوليسيس
وصورة الفنان في شبابه لجيمس جويس

Le dilemme des personnages dans la littérature moderniste :
originalité, intertextualité et hybridation dans Ulysses et A Portrait
of the Artist as a Young Man de James Joyce

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Abstract

This article examines the tension between originality and intertextuality in modernist literature through the construction of hybrid characters in James Joyce's *Ulysses* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. It starts from a central problem: modernism repeatedly presents itself as a poetics of rupture, formal renewal and aesthetic innovation, yet some of its most powerful fictional figures are deeply shaped by inherited myths, earlier texts, religious memories and cultural codes. Drawing on T. S. Eliot's conception of tradition, Julia Kristeva's theory of intertextuality and the Bakhtinian understanding of dialogic language, the study argues that modernist originality does not arise from absolute separation from the past. It is produced through transformation, displacement, reconfiguration and renewed symbolic use. The article first clarifies originality as a relational rather than purely inaugural category. It then examines intertextuality as a theoretical framework for understanding textual production and reception. Finally, it analyses Stephen Dedalus, Leopold Bloom and Molly Bloom as major Joycean figures whose identities emerge from the intersection of mythological, biblical, epic and modern urban references. The study concludes that intertextuality does not weaken literary invention; rather, it constitutes one of the principal mechanisms by which modernist fiction creates new forms of character, meaning and artistic self-definition.

Keywords

Modernism, originality, intertextuality, hybrid character, James Joyce, Stephen Dedalus, Leopold Bloom, cultural memory

الملخص

ملخص. تتناول هذه الدراسة التوتر القائم بين الأصالة والتناسل في الأدب الحديث من خلال بناء الشخصيات الهجينة في روايتي يوليسيس وصورة الفنان في شبابه لجيمس جويس. وتنطلق من إشكال مركزي مفاده أن الحداثة الأدبية تعلن نفسها غالباً بوصفها شعرية للقطيعة والتجديد الشكلي والابتكار الجمالي، في حين أن كثيراً من شخصياتها الأكثر كثافة تتشكل من أساطير موروثية ونصوص سابقة وذاكرات دينية ورموز ثقافية. وبالاستناد إلى تصور ت. س. إليوت للتقليد، وإلى نظرية جوليا كريستيفا في التناسل، وإلى الفهم الباختييني للطابع الحوارية للغة، تجادل الدراسة بأن الأصالة الحداثية لا تنشأ من الانفصال المطلق عن الماضي، بل من تحويله وإزاحته وإعادة تشكيله ومنحه وظيفة رمزية جديدة. وتوضح الدراسة

أولاً أن الأصالة فئة علائقية لا تعني الخلق من العدم، ثم تعرض التناص بوصفه إطاراً نظرياً لفهم إنتاج النص وتلقيه، قبل أن تحلل ستيفن ديدالوس وليوبولد بلوم ومولي بلوم باعتبارها شخصيات جويسية تتكون هويتها عند تقاطع المرجعيات الأسطورية والكتابية والملحمية والحضرية الحديثة. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن التناص لا يضعف الاختراع الأدبي، بل يمثل إحدى الآليات الأساسية التي تنتج من خلالها الرواية الحديثة أشكالاً جديدة للشخصية والمعنى والتعيين الفني للذات.

الكلمات المفتاحية

الحداثة، الأصالة، التناص، الشخصية الهجينة، جيمس جويس، ستيفن ديدالوس، ليوبولد بلوم، الذاكرة الثقافية

Résumé

Cet article examine la tension entre originalité et intertextualité dans la littérature moderniste à travers la construction de personnages hybrides dans *Ulysses* et *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* de James Joyce. Il part d'un problème central : le modernisme se présente souvent comme une poétique de la rupture, du renouvellement formel et de l'innovation esthétique, alors même que certaines de ses figures fictionnelles les plus fortes restent profondément façonnées par des mythes hérités, des textes antérieurs, des mémoires religieuses et des codes culturels. En s'appuyant sur la conception de la tradition chez T. S. Eliot, sur la théorie de l'intertextualité de Julia Kristeva et sur la compréhension bakhtinienne du langage dialogique, l'étude soutient que l'originalité moderniste ne naît pas d'une séparation absolue avec le passé. Elle se produit par transformation, déplacement, reconfiguration et nouvel usage symbolique. L'article clarifie d'abord l'originalité comme catégorie relationnelle plutôt que comme catégorie strictement inaugurale. Il examine ensuite l'intertextualité comme cadre théorique de la production et de la réception textuelles. Il analyse enfin Stephen Dedalus, Leopold Bloom et Molly Bloom comme des figures joyciennes majeures dont l'identité surgit au croisement de références mythologiques, bibliques, épiques et urbaines modernes. L'étude conclut que l'intertextualité ne diminue pas l'invention littéraire ; elle constitue au contraire l'un des mécanismes essentiels par lesquels la fiction moderniste produit de nouvelles formes de personnage, de sens et d'affirmation artistique.

Mots-clés

Modernisme, originalité, intertextualité, personnage hybride, James Joyce, Stephen Dedalus, Leopold Bloom, mémoire culturelle

Introduction

One of the most persistent ways of defining literary modernism is through the imperative to "make it new." The phrase, commonly associated with Ezra Pound, has often been read as a condensed formula for modernist innovation: formal experiment, aesthetic rupture, a refusal of inherited conventions and a determination to reconfigure the possibilities of literary representation. Yet the slogan becomes problematic as soon as it is interpreted as a demand for absolute novelty. Modernist writing is rarely new in the sense of being created from nothing. Even when it rejects the conventions of previous literary movements, it continues to negotiate with earlier forms, symbols, myths, genres and cultural memories. The modernist work is therefore structured by a productive tension: it seeks novelty while remaining intensely engaged with the past.

This tension is particularly visible in the construction of characters. Modernist figures are frequently presented as fragmented, estranged, self-conscious and formally innovative; at the same time, their names, destinies, symbolic functions and narrative positions often echo older textual models. Such characters appear suspended between originality and inheritance. They belong fully to the modern world, yet they remain partially readable through prior mythological, biblical, epic and literary frameworks. This article proposes to understand that condition through the notion of the hybrid character: a fictional figure whose identity is produced at the intersection of individual narrative existence and intertextual memory.

The main question guiding the present study is therefore the following: how can modernist characters be considered original when they are shaped by earlier texts and cultural memory? The question does not merely concern influence or source-hunting. It concerns the very definition of originality in modernist poetics. If a character is built through allusion, rewriting and symbolic correspondence, does that intertextual construction diminish its novelty, or does it become the very condition of novelty? The article argues that originality in modernist literature should not be understood as absolute rupture, but as a process of transformation. What is inherited is not merely repeated; it is displaced, reframed, refunctionalized and reanimated within a new historical and aesthetic situation.

James Joyce offers a particularly significant case for examining this problem. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses* are among the most complex modernist works in terms of intertextual density. Joyce's fiction draws on Greek myth, Christian symbolism, Homeric epic, Irish history, urban modernity, scholastic thought, popular culture and the materiality of everyday speech. His characters are not autonomous inventions detached from literary memory; they are layered textual formations. Stephen Dedalus is readable through Daedalus, Icarus, Saint Stephen and the modern figure of the self-fashioning artist. Leopold Bloom is framed by the Homeric figure of Odysseus, yet radically transformed into an

ordinary urban subject moving through Dublin. Molly Bloom echoes Penelope, but the echo becomes a site of transformation rather than simple reproduction.

The methodological orientation of the study is qualitative and interpretive. It combines close reading with intertextual analysis to show how names, mythological references, symbolic structures, and narrative correspondences participate in character construction. The analysis does not attempt to catalogue all the allusions in Joyce's works; such a project would be both excessive and reductive. It instead focuses on how selected intertextual frameworks produce characterological meaning and reshape the modernist idea of originality. The argument proceeds in five stages. First, it clarifies the notion of originality in literary discourse and revisits T. S. Eliot's conception of tradition. Second, it examines intertextuality as a theoretical framework for textual production and reception. Third, it situates intertextuality within modernist literature. Fourth, it analyses Joyce's hybrid characters through Stephen Dedalus, Leopold Bloom and Molly Bloom. Finally, it shows that Joyce's originality lies not in erasing the past but in giving inherited forms a new symbolic life.

1. Originality, Tradition and Modernist Renewal

In common usage, originality is often understood as the capacity to think independently and to produce something new. In academic and artistic contexts alike, the notion usually implies creativity, innovation and a departure from what has already been said or done. Such a definition, however, becomes unstable when applied to literature. A literary work never emerges in a vacuum. It is written within a language, within genres, within institutions, within traditions and within networks of earlier forms and meanings. Even the desire to reject tradition presupposes a relation to tradition, because one can only break with what one has first recognized as a prior order.

For that reason, originality in literature cannot be reduced to absolute invention. A work may be original because it offers a new interpretation of inherited material, because it shifts perspective, because it formalizes an experience differently or because it reorganizes familiar elements into an unprecedented configuration. The literary field itself encourages this kind of relational originality: writers return to pre-existing plots, myths, figures and symbolic structures, but they make them signify otherwise. Originality is therefore less a matter of pure beginning than of differential positioning. It depends on how a text inserts itself into the history of forms while altering that history's meaning.

This point is essential for understanding modernism. Modernist writers insist on experiment, rupture and formal difficulty, yet they do not simply erase the past. On the contrary, many of them construct modernity through a demanding and often ambivalent relation to earlier traditions. T. S. Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent" remains central in this respect. Eliot rejects the Romantic idea that poetic greatness lies in the spontaneous expression of an isolated self. The

individual talent becomes meaningful only in relation to a larger historical order constituted by earlier works. The new work enters that order and, by entering it, subtly modifies the significance of what came before. Tradition is thus not an inert archive; it is an active system of relations.

Eliot's position clarifies a paradox at the heart of modernist originality. The genuinely new work does not sever itself from all precedent. Rather, it transforms inherited material, making it function differently. Tradition becomes a condition of invention because it provides the symbolic matter through which invention becomes legible. Modernism is therefore not simply anti-traditional. It is more accurately a poetics of critical inheritance: it receives, rearranges, distorts, intensifies and reinterprets cultural memory. The modernist text may appear fragmentary because it is written after the breakdown of older certainties, but its fragments often belong to recognizable cultural, literary and mythological systems.

When applied to character construction, this view suggests that a fictional character may be original even when it bears the traces of earlier figures. A character may carry an allusive name, evoke a mythic predecessor, reproduce an epic pattern or recall a religious model while nonetheless becoming new through the specific context in which it is rewritten. Originality is not cancelled by the presence of antecedents. It begins precisely when antecedents are transformed by a new narrative situation. This is the threshold at which originality meets intertextuality.

2. Intertextuality as Textual Relation and Interpretive Practice

The concept of intertextuality offers a theoretical vocabulary for understanding how literary texts participate in broader networks of meaning. Although the term is associated with Julia Kristeva, who introduced it in the 1960s through her engagement with Bakhtin, the insight it names is older: texts are not self-enclosed entities. They speak with, through and against other texts. Intertextuality designates this condition of textual relationality, in which meaning is produced not only within a single work but also through the relations that connect that work to previous and future discourses.

At a basic level, intertextuality refers to the ways in which one text incorporates, transforms, echoes or presupposes another. These relations may appear as direct quotation, allusion, rewriting, parody, reminiscence, adaptation, generic imitation, symbolic resonance or structural correspondence. Intertextuality also concerns reception. A reference may remain dormant unless the reader recognizes the cultural or literary code that activates it. Meaning is therefore co-produced by the text and by a readerly memory capable of connecting signs, names, motifs and narrative patterns to a larger field of cultural intelligibility.

Kristeva's formulation, developed in dialogue with Bakhtinian dialogism, famously describes the text as a mosaic of quotations. Such a formulation should not be reduced to the claim that writing is merely derivative. Rather, it emphasizes that literary production always takes place within a field of already circulating signs. The author does not create out of pure emptiness; the author writes within language, and language itself is historically and socially stratified. Every utterance carries the memory of previous uses and opens itself to future reinscription. From this perspective, the literary work is less a closed object than a site of crossing, where discourses meet, conflict, overlap and transform one another.

Bakhtin's importance lies in his understanding of language as dialogic. Words do not belong entirely to a single speaker; they come with social accents, prior intentions and ideological histories. When Kristeva translates this insight into the concept of intertextuality, the literary text becomes a field where several voices and textual surfaces intersect. The horizontal relation between writer and reader is inseparable from the vertical relation that connects the text to earlier cultural formations. This double axis helps explain why intertextuality is not simply an ornament. It is one of the ways by which a work becomes meaningful.

This theoretical perspective has important consequences for literary analysis. If a text is partly constituted by its relations to other texts, interpretation cannot be limited to what is explicitly stated on the page. It must also account for what is recalled, displaced, transformed or silently invoked. Intertextuality turns reading into a relational practice. It encourages attention to memory, recurrence, echo, deviation and symbolic transfer. It also prevents the critic from confusing the presence of a prior source with a lack of originality. A work may borrow a structure while radically altering its function; it may preserve a name while changing the ethical, social or psychological meaning attached to it.

Intertextuality is especially relevant when the object of analysis is a character. Characters are not only psychological or narrative entities. They may also be discursive formations shaped by names, archetypes, myths, genres and cultural scripts. A character can be read both within the story's internal logic and within a broader field of textual echoes. The name Stephen Dedalus, for example, does not merely identify a character; it activates a system of mythological and religious associations. The name Leopold Bloom is not merely an ordinary name in Dublin; within *Ulysses*, it is placed in relation to the Homeric architecture of wandering, return and recognition. Once such relations become active, characterization becomes inseparable from intertextual design.

3. Intertextuality in Modernist Literature

Modernist literature offers especially fertile ground for intertextual analysis. Its formal difficulty, symbolic density and allusive texture frequently require readers to move between the immediate world of the text and larger cultural archives. Far from being a decorative feature, intertextuality in modernism is often one of the

principal mechanisms through which meaning is organized. It allows modernist writers to place the fragmented present in relation to myths, canonical works, religious traditions, and collective memories that no longer function as stable authorities yet retain symbolic force.

This is partly because modernism emerges in a moment of cultural crisis. War, industrialization, urbanization, secularization, mass culture and the erosion of inherited certainties forced writers to rethink both subjectivity and representation. Older forms could neither be simply preserved nor entirely abandoned. They had to be reworked. Myths, classical narratives, religious symbolism and canonical literary patterns were reactivated within new and often fragmented structures. Intertextuality therefore became a means of measuring discontinuity: the ancient text or myth is placed beside the modern situation, not in order to restore seamless continuity, but to expose rupture, irony, disproportion, loss and renewed possibility.

Modernist intertextuality is thus not merely a matter of borrowing. It involves transformation. A myth may be relocated into an urban setting; an epic structure may be reduced to an ordinary day; a saint's name may be attached to a rebellious intellectual who struggles against institutional religion; a legendary craftsman may become the model for an artist seeking escape from family, church and nation. These operations do not simply repeat the past. They produce new meanings by displacing inherited material into conditions of modern alienation and self-consciousness.

The use of myth in modernist literature is particularly significant. Myth provides a structure capable of organizing the apparent chaos of modern experience, but it also becomes a means of revealing the distance between ancient frameworks and modern life. In Joyce, the Homeric epic does not impose a heroic order on Dublin. It creates a double perspective: the ordinary is magnified by the epic frame, while the epic is humanized, ironized and historicized by the ordinary. This simultaneous elevation and demystification is one of the defining operations of modernist intertextuality.

The same dynamic applies to character. Modernist characters often appear as singular consciousnesses shaped by alienation, mobility, hesitation and inner division. Yet they are frequently connected to prior figures through naming, patterning or symbolic analogy. Their individuality is doubled by a second dimension: they become readable as rewritten forms of culturally sedimented personae. Such characters are neither mere copies nor purely autonomous inventions. They are hybrid formations generated by intertextual reconfiguration.

The notion of the hybrid character is useful because it avoids a false opposition between influence and originality. A hybrid character is not less original because it bears traces of the past. On the contrary, its originality may reside precisely in the way those traces are reorganized, displaced and given new historical meaning.

In modernist literature, the character becomes new by passing through inherited forms and by forcing those forms to signify differently. Hybridity is therefore not a deficiency of originality; it is a mode of modernist invention.

4. Joyce's Intertextual Poetics: Character as Palimpsest

James Joyce provides one of the richest examples of this modernist logic. His fiction is marked by extraordinary formal experimentation, as well as a dense and deliberate use of intertextual reference. His works do not merely contain allusions; they are structurally organized through relations to older texts, myths, religious traditions, philosophical vocabularies, popular songs, liturgical forms and urban discourses. Joyce is therefore especially useful for examining how originality and hybridity intersect at the level of characterization.

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and *Ulysses* are illuminating because they construct characters who are fully situated in the social and historical realities of Ireland, yet also legible through prior symbolic frameworks. Joyce's characters do not cease to be modern because they are allusive. Rather, their modernity becomes readable through the tension between the immediate world they inhabit and the inherited narratives that shadow them. Stephen Dedalus is a young Irish intellectual, but he is also placed under the sign of Daedalus, Icarus and Saint Stephen. Leopold Bloom is a Dublin advertising canvasser, but he is also aligned with Odysseus. Molly Bloom is a woman of modern Dublin, but her position in *Ulysses* activates and transforms the figure of Penelope.

To describe these characters as intertextual is not to deny their narrative individuality. Joyce does not replace psychological and social specificity with literary reference. He combines them. The intertextual frame does not absorb the character into myth; it allows the character's modern situation to acquire depth and resonance. Conversely, the modern situation modifies the mythic or biblical frame. The past becomes readable anew because it is forced to pass through the ordinary, unstable and historically situated experience of modern subjects. Joyce's originality lies in this double movement.

4.1. Stephen Dedalus: Daedalian Artifice and the Labyrinth of Formation

Stephen Dedalus is the clearest example of Joycean hybrid characterization. In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, the surname "Dedalus" unmistakably recalls Daedalus, the craftsman of Greek mythology associated with invention, architecture, the labyrinth and the perilous possibility of flight. The allusion is not marginal. It gives symbolic form to Stephen's struggle for artistic self-definition. He experiences family, religion and nation as constraining structures from which he seeks release, and the Daedalian framework allows Joyce to articulate this struggle in terms of craft, confinement, aspiration and risk.

Daedalus, in the classical myth, is both maker and prisoner of the labyrinth. He possesses technical skill, but that skill places him in a structure from which he must later escape. This ambiguity is crucial for Stephen. He seeks artistic freedom, but his freedom is never simple. The social, religious and national structures that constrain him are also part of the material from which his consciousness is formed. He cannot become an artist by merely denying them; he must transform them into aesthetic matter. The name Dedalus, therefore, marks the artist as both imprisoned and inventive, trapped within inherited structures and capable of fashioning a means of escape from them.

The Daedalian allusion also introduces the figure of Icarus. Flight is not only liberation; it is danger. Stephen's desire to rise above the limitations of his environment contains the possibility of failure, excess and fall. Joyce's use of the myth, therefore, prevents a simplistic heroic reading. Stephen is not presented as a triumphant genius whose emancipation is guaranteed. He is a figure of becoming, and that becoming remains precarious. His artistic ambition is necessary, but it is exposed to illusion, pride and incompleteness. Intertextuality thus serves not only to elevate Stephen but also to dramatise the instability of self-fashioning in the modern age.

The narrative structure of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* reinforces this pattern. Stephen's development is not a straight line of maturation. It proceeds through crises, reversals, temptations, moments of exaltation and moments of humiliation. Each apparent movement toward freedom is accompanied by the threat of renewed captivity. The labyrinth is therefore not only an external structure; it is also psychological, linguistic and spiritual. Stephen must find his way through inherited discourses: family speech, school discipline, Catholic doctrine, nationalist rhetoric and the aesthetic theories by which he attempts to justify his vocation. His identity is constructed through struggle with these discourses rather than through immediate self-possession.

The famous movement toward artistic exile at the end of *Portrait* should therefore be read in two senses. On one hand, Stephen's decision to leave represents an assertion of artistic autonomy. On the other hand, the Daedalian model reminds the reader that escape is not the same as completion. The artist who flies away carries the labyrinth within him. His originality will depend not on severing all ties with the past but on transforming the inherited material of Ireland, Catholicism, classical myth and European literature into a new artistic language. Stephen becomes modern because he is both singular and haunted by prior forms.

4.2. Stephen, Saint Stephen and the Conflict with Institutional Religion

Stephen's first name adds another layer to the character's hybrid construction. "Stephen" evokes Saint Stephen, traditionally identified as the first Christian martyr. This biblical resonance introduces a symbolic field of speech, trial, dissent,

judgment and sacrifice. Like the saint whose name he bears, Stephen is linked to conflict with religious authority. Yet Joyce does not reproduce the model of martyrdom in a straightforward devotional sense. He secularizes and complicates it by attaching it to a modern intellectual whose relation to Catholicism is marked by fascination, rebellion, guilt and aesthetic transformation.

The biblical allusion is important because Stephen's crisis is not merely social or familial. It is also religious and linguistic. Catholic discourse shapes his imagination, his fear, his sense of sin, his relation to the body and his understanding of vocation. Even when he rejects priesthood and institutional submission, the symbolic structures of Catholicism continue to inform his language and consciousness. The name Stephen therefore produces an intertextual paradox: the character who seeks liberation from religious authority remains partly constituted by the vocabulary and imaginative force of that authority.

This does not make Stephen inconsistent; it makes him modern. His subjectivity is not pure autonomy. It is produced through the internal conflict of inherited systems. Joyce's character is original not because he exists outside the structures of myth and religion, but because he exposes how a modern self is formed in tension with them. The biblical layer intersects with the Daedalian layer: Stephen is at once a craftsman, a potential flyer, a possible fallen son, a dissenter, and a figure of trial. The character's density comes from the convergence of these lineages.

The result is a form of characterization that exceeds psychological realism without abandoning it. Stephen is not reduced to an allegory of Daedalus or Saint Stephen. He remains a historically specific Irish subject, marked by the educational, religious and political conditions of his world. Yet the intertextual references make that specificity resonate with larger symbolic patterns. Joyce's art consists of making the local and the inherited illuminate one another. Through Stephen, modernist originality appears as the transformation of cultural memory into the unstable drama of artistic consciousness.

4.3. Leopold Bloom and the Modernization of the Epic Hero

The same principle operates in *Ulysses*, though on a larger structural scale. The novel's relation to Homer's *Odyssey* is one of the best-known examples of modernist intertextuality. Joyce does not reproduce the epic in any simple sense. Instead, he relocates its structural and symbolic energies into the ordinary life of Dublin on 16 June 1904. The result is not a mere parody of the epic. It is a radical transposition through which heroic wandering, danger, return, hospitality, recognition and domestic reunion are reinterpreted in the conditions of modern urban existence.

Leopold Bloom, aligned with Odysseus, is not a warrior-hero returning from Troy. He is an advertising canvasser moving through streets, shops, pubs, offices, funerals, memories, bodily sensations and social encounters. The scale has changed. Seas, monsters and divine interventions are replaced by urban move-

ment, conversation, prejudice, hunger, grief, sexuality and interior thought. Yet the reduction of epic grandeur does not simply diminish Bloom. It reveals other forms of heroism: patience, attentiveness, tact, ethical imagination, vulnerability and endurance.

This is Bloom's originality as a modernist character. He is both ordinary and epic, minor and symbolically enlarged. The Homeric frame magnifies the everyday, while the everyday humanizes and historicizes the epic. Bloom's wandering through Dublin becomes a modern version of return, but return itself is no longer a triumphant restoration of heroic identity. It is marked by marital fracture, grief over the dead child Rudy, social marginalization and the uncertain possibility of domestic coexistence. Bloom's heroism is not conquest; it is the capacity to remain open to others within an environment that repeatedly misrecognizes him.

Bloom's position as an Irish Jew intensifies this hybrid condition. He is at once inside and outside Dublin society. He belongs to the urban world he traverses, yet he is repeatedly exposed to suspicion, exclusion and anti-Semitic discourse. This marginality gives new meaning to the Odyssean pattern. The wanderer is not only a traveller seeking home; he is a subject whose belonging is unstable. Joyce transforms epic wandering into a modern experience of social, ethnic and emotional displacement. The intertextual structure, therefore, does not merely decorate Bloom's character; it helps organise the ethical and historical significance of his experience.

Bloom's originality lies precisely in this double legibility. He is not a disguised Odysseus, nor is he an autonomous modern character accidentally placed under an epic title. He is a hybrid figure in whom the epic and the modern modify one another. The reader perceives the ordinary through the memory of epic, but also reads the epic differently through the ordinary. Odysseus becomes less remote, less exclusively heroic, while Bloom becomes more significant than his social invisibility might suggest. In this mutual transformation, Joyce demonstrates that intertextuality can be an engine of invention rather than a sign of dependence.

4.4. Molly Bloom, Penelope and the Rewriting of Fidelity

Molly Bloom also participates in Joyce's intertextual architecture through her relation to Penelope. In the *Odyssey*, Penelope is often associated with waiting, fidelity, cunning delay and domestic endurance. Joyce activates this framework but refuses to reproduce it passively. Molly is not a static emblem of conjugal constancy. She is a desiring, remembering, speaking subject whose final monologue radically expands the space of female interiority within the novel. Her relation to Penelope is therefore transformative rather than imitative.

The Penelope correspondence becomes significant precisely because of its deviations. Molly waits, but not in the idealized epic sense. She is situated within a modern marriage marked by erotic dissatisfaction, memory, bodily presence, social negotiation and emotional ambiguity. Her sexuality is not erased in order

to preserve the epic model of fidelity. Instead, Joyce uses the model to question the inherited idealization of the waiting wife. Molly's voice brings the epic figure into contact with modern female subjectivity, corporeality and narrative agency.

This transformation matters for the article's broader argument because it shows that hybrid characterization is not limited to male figures of artistic aspiration or urban wandering. Joyce's intertextuality also revises gendered literary inheritance. Molly is readable through Penelope, but she is not contained by Penelope. The inherited figure becomes a point of departure for the production of a new narrative voice. Her final monologue does not simply close the epic pattern of return; it opens a different relation to memory, desire and affirmation.

Through Molly, Joyce makes clear that intertextuality can function critically. It can expose the limitations of inherited models by rewriting them from a new subjective position. The classical reference is preserved, but its meaning is displaced. The woman who might have remained a symbolic endpoint of male return becomes one of the strongest centres of verbal and affective energy in the novel. Molly's hybridity therefore participates in Joyce's modernist reconfiguration of character: she is formed through an inherited structure, but she changes the value of that structure by speaking from within and against it.

4.5. Originality as Reconfiguration: Character, Reader and Cultural Memory

The examples of Stephen Dedalus, Leopold Bloom and Molly Bloom show that Joyce's characters are produced through a complex relation between singularity and textual inheritance. Their originality cannot be measured by asking whether they have no antecedents. They have many antecedents, and Joyce makes those antecedents visible. The relevant question is how inherited material is reorganized. In Joyce, mythological, biblical and epic references are not fixed templates imposed on characters from outside. They become dynamic frameworks through which modern subjectivity is explored.

This dynamic also changes the reader's role. Joyce's intertextuality demands active interpretation. Readers are invited to recognize correspondences, but also to measure deviations. They must ask not only who Bloom resembles, but how the resemblance transforms both Bloom and Odysseus; not only why Stephen bears a Daedalian name, but how that name illuminates and complicates his artistic becoming; not only how Molly recalls Penelope, but how her voice alters the inherited meaning of Penelope's position. Intertextuality therefore produces a mode of reading based on comparison, displacement and critical attention.

Such reading confirms that originality in modernist literature is neither pure invention nor simple repetition. It is reconfiguration. Joyce does not attempt to create characters outside history. He creates characters whose modernity becomes intelligible because they carry the memory of previous forms while refusing to be reducible to them. The past is not an obstacle to invention; it is the material

through which invention is staged. The modernist character becomes new by making inherited figures function under altered historical, social and psychological conditions.

The category of hybridity is therefore central. A hybrid character is not a confused mixture lacking identity. It is a structured site of intersection where different textual lineages meet and produce meaning. Joyce's hybrid characters are original because they hold together incompatible scales: myth and daily life, epic and advertisement, martyrdom and adolescent rebellion, artistic vocation and linguistic inheritance, domestic return and unresolved desire. Their complexity comes from the pressure exerted by these overlapping frameworks. In this sense, the characters' dilemma is also modernism's dilemma: to create the new without pretending that the past has disappeared.

Conclusion

The analysis developed in this article has sought to show that the relation between originality and intertextuality in modernist literature is not oppositional but constitutive. Modernism certainly values innovation, experiment, formal renewal and the reorganization of literary language. Yet its newness is rarely founded on pure rupture. It emerges instead through a complex labour of transformation in which prior texts, myths and symbolic structures are reactivated within new literary forms.

This is particularly clear at the level of character construction. Stephen Dedalus, Leopold Bloom and Molly Bloom illustrate how the modernist character may be at once singular and inherited, historically situated and intertextually resonant. These figures are best understood as hybrid characters: not because they are derivative, but because they condense several textual histories while remaining irreducibly modern. Stephen transforms the Daedalian and biblical inheritance into a drama of artistic self-fashioning. Bloom converts the epic wanderer into an ordinary urban subject whose heroism is ethical, patient and vulnerable. Molly rewrites the Penelope figure by bringing the inherited model of fidelity into contact with desire, memory and female narrative voice.

Joyce's fiction demonstrates that intertextuality is one of the principal ways through which literary originality becomes possible. By rewriting myth within the everyday, by shifting epic structures into urban experience and by loading names with symbolic memory, Joyce produces characters whose novelty lies in reconfiguration rather than in creation *ex nihilo*. Intertextuality does not weaken invention; it gives invention historical depth, cultural resonance and interpretive energy.

The modernist principle of making it new should therefore be understood not as a denial of the past, but as a transformation of the past. What is new in literature is not always what has no precedent. It is often what gives precedent a new form, a new function and a new life. Joyce's hybrid characters embody this

principle with particular force. They show that modernist originality is born not from the erasure of textual memory, but from its creative reactivation.

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