

Epiphanies in Brazilian Literature: A Joycean Influence.

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Abstract. This article aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of two distinct short stories authored by prominent Brazilian writers, Clarice Lispector and Luiz Vilela. Through rigorous bibliographical research, these narratives are examined through the lens of Epiphany, a concept pioneered by James Joyce. Epiphany, in this context, represents a profound revelation about the essence of a common object, which may unfold in either a pleasant or unpleasant manner. James Joyce's utilization of Epiphany as a literary device not only contributed to his distinctive style but also paved the way for broader literary exploration. Beyond Joyce's mastery of language, this article delves into the concept of intertextuality, a term coined initially by Julia Kristeva. Intertextuality is the intricate web of connections that link various texts, allowing for the creation of entirely new literary works. The intersection of Epiphany and intertextuality is examined through the works of Lispector and Vilela, who skillfully adapt Joyce's concept to their unique writing styles. The analysis reveals that Joyce's Epiphany is present to varying degrees in the works of these Brazilian authors. It is noteworthy that these authors employ the concept in distinctive ways, showcasing their creativity and originality. Importantly, it is emphasized that this divergence does not diminish the value of their texts within the realm of literature. On the contrary, it serves to enrich the world of writing, demonstrating how literary concepts can evolve and adapt to the individuality of each author's voice.

Keywords. Intertextuality, Epiphany, short stories, Brazilian writers.

1. Introduction

This paper focus on discussing the concept of Epiphany in literature as developed by James Joyce and its intertextuality in works written by two Brazilian authors, namely Clarice Lispector and Luiz Vilela. Bibliographic references were used as a methodology. The notion of intertextuality was based on Julia Kristeva's conception. It is then argued that, from different perspectives, these Brazilian authors approached the use of the idea of Epiphany in their works, applying their own unique styles in the process.

2. Epiphany by James Joyce

In Richard Ellmann's 1982 biography of James Joyce, Joyce is described as 'the porcupine of authors' [Ellmann 1982, p. 6] due to his temptation and achievement of creating characters unusual for their historically known roles. He essentially subverted the personalities while the audience was attached to the past, possessing a romantic view of human beings. Joyce presented to the entire world heroes from a different perspective, causing a rupture in the traditional concept of heroism. During that time, writers were striving to develop their own styles in an effort to introduce something new to the world. However, not everyone was prepared to confront an

antihero or perceive the true nature of men from a viewpoint that was not realistic, but rather surrealistic.

So, Joyce developed his concept of epiphany as a moment in which the soul reveals itself in a radiant form, as an additional layer of information during a very ordinary event that has just started to occur. This event can be very common but not necessarily pleasant; it can also be quite the opposite. Regarding this concept, Ellmann in 1982 also wrote about Joyce, saying, 'The epiphany was the sudden 'revelation of the whatness of a thing,' the moment in which 'the soul of the commonest object... seems to us radiant.' Joyce believed that artists were charged with experiencing such revelations and should seek them not among gods but among ordinary people in everyday, unostentatious, and even unpleasant moments.' [Ellmann, 1982, p. 83]

The term "epiphany" is not new; it has deep roots in Christianity, which is possibly where Joyce drew his inspiration from. However, in literature, particularly within the domain of Joyce, it took on a new meaning as explained above.

In Joyce's short stories published in the book "Dubliners," it becomes evident that all the signs of this style, including language usage, are present. Having said that, in the next section, the topic will

focus on how the concept of epiphany was applied by two Brazilian writers through the lens of intertextuality.

2.1 Intertextuality by Julia Kristeva

Having introduced James Joyce's concept of Epiphany, it is essential to provide an explanation of intertextuality, a term coined by Julia Kristeva in 1980. According to Kristeva, "The text is, therefore, a product of productivity, which means, first, that its relationship to the language in which it is situated is redistributive (both destructive and constructive), and thus, it can be better approached through logical categories rather than linguistic ones. Second, it is a permutation of texts, an intertextuality: within the space of a given text, several utterances taken from other texts intersect and neutralize one another." [Kristeva, 1980, p. 36]

This implies that a text will always have connections to other texts, and relationships among different texts genuinely exist. However, texts are not mere copies of other writings; they represent a reconstruction that builds upon what has been produced before. This intersection allows the new writer to incorporate certain elements from previous texts and create an entirely new work through intertextuality. This new creation is not a matter of mere copying or plagiarism; it elevates the new text to a different but equally innovative and creative level.

Having said that, it is important to clarify that a new text can engage in intertextuality on various levels. Not only will the content play a crucial role, but the language usage will also demonstrate when this occurs in another piece of writing.

Therefore, in the next section, the concept of Epiphany under intertextuality will be discussed by analyzing two short stories written by two different Brazilian authors..

2.2 Epiphany under Clarice Lispector in the short story named "Amor" or "Love".

This short story narrates the life of a lady who leads a comfortable life in the middle class. One day, after shopping at a grocery store, she boarded the tram on her way home. During her journey, she noticed a blind man standing there. Suddenly, one event sent her spiraling out of control, as the man was chewing gum. This sight had such a profound impact on her that she could no longer think clearly. The revelation that a blind man could chew gum in complete darkness destabilized the woman, and we can closely relate this to the concept of Joyce's Epiphany and intertextuality because all the elements are represented in the text.

The incident was so powerful that she dropped her package on the tram's floor, causing fright among the passengers, in addition to her scream. She became so perturbed by that scene that she even missed her

stop. It was difficult for her to figure out where she was, and she eventually got off the tram. When she finally managed to get home, she still displayed confusion in her thoughts. She persisted, prepared dinner, received some visitors to share the meal, but that event did not disappear from her mind.

She felt humiliated. In her innermost thoughts, she believed she couldn't even be an option for someone like the blind man, someone deserving of love.

So, the dinner continued. After hearing a noise coming from the kitchen, she rushed to check what had happened, and she found her husband staring at the spilled coffee. She felt a fear of the possibility of being alone or losing her partner.

Then, it was time to go to bed. At this point, the Epiphany in Clarice Lispector's work differs from Joyce's Epiphany because the woman tends to revert to the psychological state she was in before the event she experienced on the tram.

In Joyce's works, after the revelation, something is changed forever. In Lispector's Epiphany, the event or the character tends to revert to a point of origin and pretend that nothing has occurred. Lispector's story concludes with a powerful statement that emphasizes this: "Before going to bed, as if extinguishing a candle, she blew out the little flame of the day." [Lispector, 2015, p. 8]

2.3 James Joyce's Epiphany in Luiz Vilela's short story also named "Amor" or "Love"

Although this other short story has the same title as the one analyzed before, the plot is entirely different. A couple starts a conversation in which the girl is showing her boyfriend a pair of fancy shoes through a shop window. Suddenly, the lighthearted conversation takes a darker turn, and the couple begins to argue about how they have changed over the course of their time together.

This passage provides a glimpse of a revelation that may occur in the short story. As the couple walks to the bus station, they continue to reminisce about how they used to behave when they first started dating.

Upon reaching the bus stop, the girl signals her intention to end the relationship. This can be considered the great James Joyce's Epiphany in this piece of writing. The Brazilian writer has provided hints about this event. Once again, it can be seen as an example of the concept of intertextuality by Kristeva in this short story when the style of language usage is analyzed. A common situation hides the endpoint of a relationship, but later on, this is fully revealed to the audience.

At the end of this short story, the guy undergoes a transformation. He reflects on how "love is hard" [Vilela, 1983, p. 61]. He stands there, watching the bus as it carries his ex-girlfriend away on a different path.

3. Conclusion

Through a bibliographical research, the concept of Epiphany, coined by James Joyce to explain the revelations present in his writings, as well as intertextuality, coined by Julia Kristeva, were examined.

Both theories were utilized because they offer substantial support for conducting these analyses. The importance of James Joyce to world literature, especially for authors who write short stories, is evident. This holds true for the Brazilian authors studied in this context.

Furthermore, it was argued that Joyce's concept of Epiphany occurred in both texts when analyzed from the perspective of intertextuality. An essential recognition is that, under different levels, it is entirely possible to assert that such events, as described in the theory, emerged in the works of these two Brazilian writers.

However, it is crucial to highlight that each author utilized the theory in their own unique style, providing diverse and desirable perspectives.

Therefore, it is essential to consider that intertextuality is present in writings around the world. The world-famous James Joyce brought such individuality to his work that it transcends decades and continents, and his style extends infinitely beyond that of other writers.

4. References

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