Abstract

This study takes a critical look at the practice of the myth criticism of *Ulysses*. It examines the application of some of the concepts from Frazerian anthropology, Jungian psychology and Frygian criticism to the novel. This thesis seeks to establish that the study of Joyce's mythic method cannot ignore the concrete matrix of the novel, namely, Irish history—a vital factor completely overlooked by the myth critics.

The Introduction provides the background for the myth criticism of *Ulysses* which seems to be an offshoot of the 'Joyce Industry' that has misappropriated concepts from anthropology and psychology. The myth criticism of *Ulysses*, as it is practised, reveals that it has misunderstood the fundamentals of Frazer and Jung, and further worsened the case by ignoring Joyce's creative use of the archetypes. The myth critics disregard the historical substructure of the novel and instead, indulge in a mechanical application of various concepts.

Chapter One is a study of the myth critics who use the Frazerian framework to establish a close parallelism between the characters in the novel and the priest-king, the scapegoat and the Mother archetype. The Chapter identifies the contradictions in their analyses and advances an alternative reading of the novel. It makes an attempt to relate the central myth of sacral regicide to a crucial aspect of Irish history, besides demonstrating the application of other Frazerian concepts left unexplored by the rest.

Chapter Two analyzes the application of Jungian concepts to *Ulysses* by the myth critics belonging to the Jungian school. According to the Jungian framework, the
archetypes of the shadow, the anima, the Wise Old Man and others are closely related to
the characters in the novel. The Chapter locates the different loopholes in the corpus of
Jungian criticism, the chief being the deviation from Irish history and its movements. It
uses the same framework to offer an alternative analysis of the novel, but relates the
archetypes to their empirical bases in the external world of the novel. It also analyzes the
question of Stephen's self-realization, which is the main concern of the Jungians, by
using the child archetype not discussed by them so far.

Chapter Three offers a critical assessment of Frye's theory of literary criticism as
it relates to the novel. It also analyzes Frye's application of his own theory to the novel
and demonstrates how it ignores the "realistic centre" of Irish history as Joyce presents
it. The Chapter exposes the flaws both in Frye's argument and in those of the critics who
extend Frye's principles further to reach domains untouched even by the master. The
Chapter also discusses Watson who opposes this in favour of a responsible reading of the
novel which takes the dynamics of Irish history into account. It concludes with an
alternative application of the concepts of the quest-myth and the myth of the social
contract by demonstrating Joyce's innovative use of the same.

The Conclusion points out that the myth critics who ignore the historical base of
Joyce's mythic method, fail to grasp the actual function performed by these concepts in
the context of the novel. It emphasizes that the concepts are not a mere aesthetic device--
they help in the articulation of the history of Ireland through the mythic construct.

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