

The Genesis of a Genre: Impact of Philosophy and Psychology on Modern Fiction

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From time immemorial, there has been a close link between literature and philosophy. Literature has constantly been enriched by philosophers and many literary masterpieces have become philosophical treatises. It has been observed, “life manifests itself in myriad modes. Literature is the philosophical interpretation of life. It should be one of the primary goals of literary artists to propagate through their works spiritualism and the ascendancy of character. Philosophy is the very breath of literature. It is the intimate connection between literature and philosophy which endows them both with the halo of sublimity.”ⁱ Emphasizing this link between philosophy, psychology and literature in the study of man, Mijuskovic points out the “the disciplines of literature, philosophy and psychology have erected a significant and true insight into man’s fundamental nature, namely that each of us, separately, exists in isolation in a state of desolate loneliness, enclosed within the confines of a nomadic prison which we continually strive to escape.”ⁱⁱ

Literary historians and critics have identified various philosophical and psychological theories as being mainly responsible for the birth of the stream of consciousness technique in fiction. They are, William James’s theories of ‘the stream of consciousness’ and ‘the specious present’, Henri Bergson’s doctrines pertaining to ‘inner evolution’, ‘inner time’ and ‘involuntary memory’, Sigmund Freud’s theories of ‘the unconscious mind’ and ‘repressed sexual instincts’, and Carl Gustav Jung’s concepts of ‘the personal unconscious’ and ‘the collective unconscious’, to name only the major influences. The stream of consciousness technique is the product of the confluence of these various influences from such divergent fields. In order to arrive at a clear perspective of how these influences initiated the origin of the new technique in fiction, it becomes imperative to examine the significance of the various theories involved and their relevance to literature.

It was William James (1842-1910), the American philosopher and psychologist, who set the ball in motion with his new theory that thoughts are not static and separate but are always flowing like a river in the human consciousness. His analysis of the nature of consciousness in his **Principles of Psychology**, published in 1890, opened new avenues to many a writer in his perception of the human psyche. In his concept of thought and consciousness, William James was inspired by the American scientist and logician Charles Sanders Pierce. According to Pierce, knowledge cannot be conceived as a finished product or a completed system. On the other hand, “knowledge is a dynamic process, a complex event within experience.”ⁱⁱⁱ Inspired by the idea that knowledge is a dynamic process, William James postulated certain new theories pertaining to time and consciousness in his epoch-making work **Principles of Psychology**. James perceived consciousness as

an entity and outlined certain features as its essential qualities. While analyzing the nature of consciousness, James observed that “consciousness from our natal day is of a teeming multiplicity of objects and relations. The only thing which psychology has a right to postulate at the outset is a fact of thinking itself...”^{iv} Examining the nature of thought further, he concluded that human thought has five characteristics:” 1, Every thought tends to be a part of personal consciousness. 2, Within each personal consciousness thought is always changing. 3, Within each personal consciousness thought is sensibly continuous. 4, It always appears to deal with objects independent of itself. 5, It is interested in some parts of these objects to the exclusion of others, and welcomes or rejects – chooses from among them, in a word-all in a while.”^v He called it “the stream of thought” and raised further issues about the nature of thoughts and consciousness and concluded that in the personal consciousness, thoughts do not appear in a logical, coherent and separate manner. On the other hand, thoughts keep flowing in the human mind incessantly “like the gyrations of a kaleidoscope, now rapid and now slow.”^{vi} He compared it to the flow of a river and observed, “thought is continuous and it is nothing joined: it flows. A ‘river’ or a ‘stream’ are the metaphors by which it is not naturally described. In talking of it let us call it the stream of thought or of consciousness or of subjective life.”^{vii} This observation that thought process is always in a state of flux led him to analyze the nature of the present moment in time, as experienced by the human mind;

James’s theory of time perception is essentially a theory about the specious present... When we try, James said, to attend to the present moment, one of the most baffling experiences occurs. Where is it, this present? It has melted in our grasp, fled ere we could touch it, gone in the instant of becoming... the only sort of present that is perceptible, James concluded, is specious, in the sense that it is not strictly present but is a rather constant slipping into the past while yielding into the future. . . there is no perceptible present free of past and future.^{viii}

These two concepts namely, ‘the specious present’ and ‘the stream of consciousness’, pertaining to time and consciousness had far reaching consequences in psychology and literature in general and twentieth century in fiction particular.

William James’s theories were complemented by the ‘creative evolution’ concept of Henri Bergson (1859-1941), the French philosopher. He created a revolution in the history of philosophy with his theories of *la duree*, *memorie involuntary* and *élan Vital*, which have also played a determinative role in the evolution of the stream of consciousness technique. He belonged to Herbert Spencer’s evolutionist school of philosophy. This school of philosophy concerned itself with the problem of mutability. Outlining the essential elements of this school of

thought, P.S.Naidu has observed, “an ever growing personality maintaining its psychological self-identity in the midst of continuous growth is the bed-rock on which the theory of evolution can easily be grounded.”^{ix} Bergson’s contribution to this school of philosophy is his new theory about creative evolution. His major works include **Time and Free Will, An Introduction to Metaphysics, Laughter, The Creative Mind and The Creative Evolution.** In his works there is a fine synthesis of philosophy and literature, as pointed out by Shiv K.Kumar, “in Bergson’s philosophy one finds an attempt to correlate the new philosophical awareness with methods and ideals of literary composition, particularly prose-fiction.”^x His contribution to literature brought him the coveted Nobel Prize for literature in 1927.

Though he belonged to the tradition of Darwin and Spencer, Bergson distinctly differed from them in his theory of evolution. He retained the form of Spencer’s concept of evolution but completely altered its content. Bergson’s predecessors had conceived evolution as a mechanical process in which fitness of the organism for the environment is the criterion for survival. A clear instance of this is Charles Darwin’s theory of ‘the survival of the fittest’, enunciated in his **Origin of the Species.** The emphasis was only on the biological evolution or the growth of mechanics. This theory of evolution stressed the physical nature of evolution without taking cognizance of anything non-physical. But Bergson’s attitude towards change was different. According to him, “the history of life is to be understood in creative, not mechanistic terms.”^{xi} Challenging the concept that evolution is merely biological and physical, Bergson argued that evolution is basically connected with what he called *élan vital*. By *élan vital* Bergson meant the “original impetus of life”^{xii} otherwise known as the ‘vital impetus’. Thus, shifting the emphasis from the physical to *élan vital*, Bergson gave a totally new twist in direction to the theory of evolution. According to him, this vital impetus is operative behind all forms of evolution on this earth. He observed that “evolution is a creation unceasingly renewed; it creates as it goes on.”^{xiii} In other words, “breaking through the outer crust of change in the body of the living organisms which has been the concern of evolutionist thinkers so far, Bergson penetrates to the core of the evolutionary process and discovers therein the vital impulse, supra-physical in character, determining the tortuous and sinuous course of evolution”.^{xiv}

Bergson’s stress on inner reality led him to postulate certain new theories about ‘duration’ and ‘consciousness’. He probed “consciousness with the object of getting at life, for the psychic continuum which is consciousness, is but a replica of the great design by which *élan vital* operates to throw up ever increasing and divergent forms of life. And in the psychic continuum which is self-existence, Bergson finds change without ceasing... `For a conscious being to exist is to change, to change is to mature, to mature is to go on creating endlessly’.”^{xv} Bergson argued

that the essence of this continuous flux is time; but his notion of time is different from the commonly accepted concept of time and is akin to William James's theory of 'specious present'. Bergson contended that time is not a single entity and said that it cannot be counted with a clock or calculated with a calendar:

Scientific time is a mathematical conception, symbolized by the letter *T* and measured by clocks and chronometers. Because these measuring instruments are spatial bodies, scientific time is represented as an extended, homogeneous medium, composed of standard units (years, hours, [and] seconds). Most of man's practical life in society is dominated by these units. But time thus represented neither 'flows' nor 'acts'. It exists passively, like a line drawn on a surface. When we turn to our direct experience, Bergson urged, we find nothing that corresponds to this mathematical conception. What we find, on the contrary, is a flowing, irreversible succession of states that melt into each other to form an indivisible process. This process is not homogeneous but heterogeneous. It is not abstract but concrete. In short, it is 'pure time' or 'real duration' (*duree reele*), something immediately experienced as active and ongoing. If we try to represent it by a spatial image, such as a line, we only generate abstract, mathematical time, which is at bottom an illusion.^{xvi}

This division of time into *Duree* or inner time and 'clock time' or mechanical time is necessary to comprehend the flow of life. In keeping with his theory of flux, he "regarded inner time as a continuously moving stream and the divisions into past, present and future as artificial. The past lives in the present in memory and in its consciousness, and it is in this manner that it shapes the future."^{xvii} Thus, according to Bergson, time duration is "the continuous life of a memory which prolongs the past into the present, the present either containing within it a distinct form of the ceaselessly growing image of the past or more probably, showing by its continual change of quality the heavier and still heavier load we drag behind us we grow older."^{xviii}

Another important concept in Bergson's philosophy which has contributed significantly to the stream of consciousness technique is his distinction between *memorie volontaire* and *memoire involuntaire*. According to him, *memoire volontaire* or the 'voluntary memory' is the source of intellectualized ways of thinking, whereas *memorie involuntaire* or involuntary memory is the product of instinct. Since evolution is not merely physical but is the process of a life source which is always in a flux, intellect cannot comprehend this process because it can understand only finished products that have an element of finality. But evolution or the flux of life is beyond such intellectual comprehension and can be identified only by instinct which can perceive even things that are fragmentary and moving. This involuntary

memory is not controlled by the conscious mind and only it is capable of comprehending the evolution of vital impetus. Thus, these three theories; namely the concept of *élan vital* (life force), the notion of *la duree* (inner time) and the theory of *memorie involuntaire* (involuntary memory), have played a vital role in the origin and development of the stream of consciousness novel.

The figure of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) looms large in Twentieth century literature. No other thinker, be it a creative writer or scientist or philosopher has left so much of an impact on twentieth century literature as Freud has done. The influence of Freud is discernible in all genres of all literatures of the twentieth century all over the world. Accepted by many and questioned by a few, Freud has continued to attract the same attention from the intelligentsia for almost nine decades. Some of his theories have been proved beyond doubt, the validity of a few is questioned and, the significance of some is refuted, but the influence of Freud has all along remained in the field of twentieth century literature in varying intensities over the years. It is indeed remarkable that a man who was basically a psychiatrist and psychologist has influenced literature to such a great extent that Freud has almost become synonymous with modernism in World literature.

Sigmund Freud “was the first person to scientifically explore the human unconscious mind; his ideas profoundly influenced the shape of modern culture by altering man’s view of himself.”^{xix} His examination of the human psyche, which he called psychoanalysis, has influenced twentieth century novelists in their choice of themes and the portrayal of their characters. Freud studied medicine in the university of Vienna and specialized in neurology, when he came into contact with J.M.Charcot who drew his attention to the psychological aspects of neurology. Charcot used hypnotism for treating neurological disorders but Freud devised psychoanalysis for studying and treating patients with symptoms of neurosis. In the early stages he made a thorough study of the human behavior and was deeply involved in conducting experiments concerning the human mind, which culminated in his ‘psychoanalysis’ theory. Freud attained widespread recognition with the publication of his trend-setting work the **Interpretations of Dreams** in 1899. His concept of psychoanalysis became not only a theory and therapy but also a movement. His major works include **Introductory Lectures in Psychoanalysis, Beyond the Pleasure Principle, The Ego and Id, and Group Psychology and Analysis of the Ego.**

Freud’s psychoanalytic system “rested on three bases”, the unconscious, the libido theory, and resistance as the basis of therapy.”^{xx} In his study of the human psyche, Freud divided the human consciousness into three layers, the conscious, the unconscious and the preconscious and explained :

... the unconscious system may therefore be compared to a large ante-room, in which various mental excitations are crowding upon one another, like individuals human beings. Adjoining this is the second, smaller apartment, a sort of reception room, in which consciousness resides. But on the threshold between the two there stands a personage with the office of the door-keeper, who examines the various mental excitations, censors them, and denies them admittance to the reception-room when he disapproves of them... You will see at once that it does not make much difference whether the door-keeper turns any one impulse back on the threshold, or drives it out again once it has entered the reception-room; that is merely a matter of the degree of his vigilance and promptness in recognition. Now this metaphor may be employed to widen our terminology. The excitations in the unconscious, in the ante-chamber, are visible to consciousness, which is of course in the other room, so to begin with they remain unconscious. When they have pressed forward to the threshold and been turned back by the door-keeper, they are incapable of becoming conscious, we call them repressed, But even those excitations which are allowed over the threshold do not necessarily become conscious; they can only become so if they succeed in attracting the eye of the consciousness. This second chamber may be suitably called the preconscious system... Being repressed, when applied to a simple impulse, it means being unable to pass out of the unconscious system.^{xxi}

Freud developed the doctrine that adult human behavior is the consequence of certain vital childhood experiences which lie suppressed in the unconscious mind. Mostly sex is at the centre of such experiences. Such experiences are always the results of childhood sexual urges. In some cases the abuse of children by adults leaves an everlasting impression in their unconscious. Added to this factor is the 'father fixation' or 'mother fixation' of children making young girls and boys to look at their fathers and mothers as sex objects respectively. Borrowing phrases from the ancient Greek Play **Oedipus Rex**, where the protagonist unknowingly kills his father and marries his own mother and begets children, Freud called this sexual attraction towards one's mother early in life as 'Oedipus Complex'. Again borrowing another phrase from Greek literature, he termed father-fixation as 'Electra complex'. According to him, it is the objective of psychoanalysis to bring out such repressed thoughts and memories from the unconscious mind to cure the individual of his neurosis. Outlining the need for a thorough study of the human mind, he declared, "psychoanalysis sees no occasion for concealment or indirect allusions, and does not think it necessary to be ashamed of concerning itself with material so important; it is of the opinion that it is right and proper to call everything by its true name, hoping in this way the more easily to avoid disturbing suggestions."^{xxii}

According to Freud, man's conduct is preconditioned by these repressed

sexual instincts which lie in the repository of the unconscious mind. Hence repressed instincts, sexual or otherwise, are at the root of all human behavior, acting as the main motivating force. He called it 'the libido' and attributed all human motivation to it. The next important aspect of Freud's psychoanalysis is his theory concerning the three facets of human personality. He called them 'the Id' 'the Ego' and 'the super Ego'. Assigning each one of these an attribute, he said that "the ego's fundamental task is to reconcile the instinctual, biologically given demands of the Id. The Id is the reservoir of the instinctual impulses, the ego is that part of the personality that deals with reality, and the Superego is the unconscious conscience, the heir of the parents."^{xxiii}

Another important theory of Freud which has relevance to literary concepts is his interpretation of dreams. He argued that dream is only the expression of repressed instincts, sexual and otherwise, and is only an attempt at "a surrogate wish fulfillment."^{xxiv} When the unconscious wish is too strong but cannot be expressed because of "internalized prohibitions and repressions which demand the wish to take on a symbolic form if it is to be acknowledged at all."^{xxv} Explaining creativity as the expression of unfulfilled childhood desires, Freud observed, "mental work is linked to some current impression, some provoking occasion in the present which has been able to arouse one of the subject's major wishes. From there it harks back to a memory of an earlier experience (usually an infantile one) in which this wish was fulfilled; and it now creates a situation relating to the feature which is a fulfillment of the wish. What it creates is a day-dream or fantasy, which carries about it traces of its origin from the occasion which provoked it and from the memory. Thus the past, present, and future are strung together, as it were, on the thread of wish that runs through them."^{xxvi} All these theories have influenced poets, novelists and critics of the twentieth century to a considerable extent in their perception and portrayal of human nature. Particularly, the stream of consciousness fiction is the direct beneficiary of Freud's theory of the unconscious mind.

Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) was an associate of Freud in his psychoanalytical experiments but later broke away with him. He did not subscribe to Freud's theory that repressed sexual instinct is behind all attributes of human behavior. His contribution to psychology is the analytical method and hence he is called originator of analytical psychology. His main theory relates to the distinction in psychological types, namely extroverted type and introverted type. Differing sharply from his mentor Freud, Jung felt the emphasis of psychoanalysis on erotic features led to a lop-sided, distorted view of human motivation and behavior. He interpreted the implication of the libido as the expression of general creative life energy. He said that this libido is capable of giving two different traits to individuals. It can lead an individual towards external objects or into the world of other people or outdoor life. He named this 'extroversion' and called the individuals

exhibiting these traits 'extroverts'. Another attribute of libido is making people turn inward, thus leading them to the realms of ideas and images in the unconscious mind. He named this process 'introversion' and called the people showing this make-up 'introverts'.

Jung's important contribution to literature is his theories of 'the personal unconscious' and 'the collective unconscious'. "The personal unconscious consists of those associated webs of ideas and emotions that Jung named complexes, which have been repressed from consciousness because it found them too painful to acknowledge, and also of those perceptions of reality which have never forced their way into consciousness. Each individual's personal unconscious is thus to some extent explicable in terms of his own life history."^{xxvii} According to Jung, the collective unconscious, like the personal unconscious, forms a part of the individual's personality. He observes, "we mean by collective unconscious, a certain psychic disposition shaped by forces of heredity"^{xxviii} and argues that this collective unconscious is the result of the experiences of mankind as a whole which transcends the barriers of time, race and religion, forming a substratum in the individual's consciousness. This collective unconscious is the reason why people, irrespective of geographical or linguistic differences, think in terms of religion, myths and literature, adhering to certain archetypal concepts with some primordial themes. These archetypes are manifest in the form of various legends, religions, mythologies and symbols of the world. It was for this reason that "Jung turned more and more to mythology and folklore for keys to understanding the consciousness of his patients."^{xxix} The collective unconscious also manifests itself through the individual's dreams. "Jung examines dreams in terms of the struggle for mental health and significant life... For Jung dreams are another form of legends."^{xxx} These concepts of the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious also influenced contemporary literature to a large extent. Emphasizing the link between psychology and literature, Jung himself has observed, "it is obvious enough that psychology, being the study of psychic process, can be brought to bear upon the study of literature, for human psyche is the womb of the sciences and arts."^{xxxi}

Another important theory of Freud, Jung and their associate Alfred Adler, which played a vital role in the shaping of the stream of consciousness technique, is the 'free-association' theory. Free association is a psychological theory which holds that all mental activity begins with simple ideas that are both compounded into complex ideas and succeeded by other ideas in the human consciousness, governed by certain laws of association. According to the free-association theory of the psychoanalysts, "a word or idea acts as a stimulus or triggers a series of sequence of other words or ideas which may or may not have logical relationships."^{xxxii} This theory inspired modern novelists to a large extent in their portrayal of the workings of the human mind. If the theories of the unconscious mind, repressed instincts and

the collective unconscious laid the foundation for the link between the stream of consciousness technique and psychoanalysis, the theory of free-association took it to its zenith. Almost all the stream of consciousness novels are standing examples of this theory.

As all art in general and literature in particular, are – to use Aristotle's famous definition of art as *mimeses* - the imitation of life, it becomes imperative for creative writers to mirror the life around them. Henry Bamford Parkes has pointed out that "every writer grows up as a member of a particular society, and the structure of his personality, his view of life and his emotional conflicts and communications are conditioned by social factors. He is likely, moreover, to be generally receptive to those broad currents of thought and feeling which are shared by other members of the society."^{xxxiii} Thus, the various developments that occur in arts, culture, philosophy, history and religion leave their imprint on the literature of their respective ages. True to this universal law of literature, "novelists continually add to the richness of our human experience; they bring before us new topics, new characters, [and] new attitudes",^{xxxiv} trying to portray human life in its entirety.

An excellent exemplification of this theory is the stream of consciousness fiction which is the product of the various new concepts and developments in philosophy, psychology and history. In this regard David Daiches states:

New concepts of time, influenced by or at least akin to William James's view of the 'specious present' which does not really exist but which represents the continuous flow of the 'already' into the 'not yet' of retrospect into anticipation, and Henri Bergson's concept of 'duree' of time as flow and duration rather than a series of points moving chronologically forward, also influenced the twentieth century novelist, particularly in handling plot structure. If time could not be conceived of as a series of moments moving forward in a steady progress, then the traditional conception of plot which generally involved taking the hero through a sequence of testing circumstances in the chronological order, would cease to satisfy. Further, the new psychological ideas emphasized the multiplicity of consciousness, the simultaneous coexistence of several levels of consciousness in which past experience was retained and by whose retention the whole personality was colored and determined.^{xxxv}

The above observation throws light on the impact of the various influences on fiction which resulted in the origin of the stream of consciousness technique. To start with, William James's concepts of the stream of consciousness and specious present and Bergson's theories of vital impetus, inner time and involuntary memory have contributed to the original and development of the stream of consciousness technique in a big way. The English novel which had hitherto been mainly

concerned with social behavior and moral attitudes in the hands of the nineteenth century novelists like Thackeray and Dickens was given a totally new orientation. The social realism of the Edwardian novelists like Meredith and Galsworthy met its end in the hands of the experimental novelists, who began to write under the various influences cited above. Inspired by the above new theories and findings, the new writers – Marcel Proust and Edouard Dujardin in France, Dorothy Richardson, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf in England, followed by William Faulkner in America, to mention only the pioneers – instead of looking around for subject matter, turned within, making the inner life of man as their principal theme. They were not concerned with man's place in society which, according to them, was immaterial when compared to the study of man in relation to his own self. Moreover, the realization that man is not what he appears to be and that thoughts and time are not chronological as believed all along, compelled these novelists to look at the problem of characterization from a different angle. This necessitated a new technique for which also they had the key in the new theories of Bergson, William James, Freud, Adler and Jung. William James's theory that thoughts do not appear in 'chopped up bits' and are always 'flowing like a stream' in the individual consciousness attracted the new novelists' attention to the consciousness of their characters which became their prime subject matter. Following William James's theory of consciousness, these writes, while portraying the thoughts of their characters presented them as always being in a state of flux and flow. James hand further pointed out that these thoughts are nothing jointed. In accordance with this concept, the stream of consciousness writers presented the musings of their characters without any apparent logical connection between them.

Shiv K. Kumar has aptly brought out the influence of Bergson and James on the stream of consciousness novelists:

William James, like Bergson, believes that 'empty our minds as we may, some form of changing process remains for us to feel, and cannot be expelled'. Our psychic kaleidoscope is perpetually forming itself into new patterns. Like Bergson again, he exposes the human doctrine that our consciousness consists of discrete fragments capable of repeating themselves. On the contrary, he observes that consciousness can not be analyzed into fragments or 'chopped up bits'... Elsewhere, William James refers to the 'halo or penumbra surrounding the image' 'the overtone, halo or fringe', suggested also by Virginia Woolf in her description of life as a 'luminous halo', a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end.' ... What James calls 'halo, or fringe' and Virginia Woolf's 'luminous halo' is nothing else than those transitional phases of our mental process which mark the merging of the past into the present, and the fading of the past into present and the fading of the present into future, thus

making experience a continuum ... it is this durational aspect of consciousness which defines the basis of the stream of consciousness novel.”^{xxxvi}

Coming to the contribution of Sigmund Freud, it was he who was mainly responsible for the shift in the novelist’s choice of themes. Before Freud, novelists belonging to the traditional schools of fiction had portrayed their characters as being conscious of what they thought and did. They faithfully followed the traditional definition of the novel as a work of art with a theme, conflict, moral, etc. providing scope for characterization. They had all along attempted to portray characters with well defined characteristics with an eye on verisimilitude to surface reality. Freud changed all this with his theory that man is a victim of his own libido and that he often possesses a splintered personality which cannot be comprehended by a casual observation. He emphasized the importance of the unconscious or subconscious and relegated the conscious mind to the background. According to him, the real world of man lies within his unconscious mind. His surmise that human behavior is the product of suppressed sexual instincts and his theories of traumatic personality, father-fixation and mother-fixation influenced Modern literature in general and fiction in particular. “Man is a victim of his own compulsive libido and social repressions... Psychoanalytical interpretations of psychologists encouraged creative writers to choose such themes which will reveal the intricacies of human emotions... D.H.Lawrence, Thomas Mann, Sherwood Anderson and May Sinclair used Freudian interpretations to give true perspective of the human psyche. James Joyce and Virginia Woolf depended on psychological findings to depict the turbulent mind of a human being.”^{xxxvii}

Carl Gustav Jung’s theories have also played a dominant role in the development of this form. In accordance with Jung’s theory that literature is the study of human psyche, the stream of consciousness novelists have attempted to fathom man’s mind in their works. Drawing the attention of the readers to the pre-speech levels of consciousness, they have attempted to probe the inner most recesses of the human mind. Jung’s theories of introversion and extroversion, and the personal unconscious and collective unconscious are at work in the novelists’ choice of their themes, making them focus their attention only on the inner life of the characters. As for the interpretation of dreams as the expressions of the unconscious and surrogates for legends, this concept is at the root of symbolism and myth-making frequently resorted to by these novelists. A classic example of this point is James Joyce’s treatment of the myth of *Odyssey* in his **Ulysses**.

To enumerate the essential qualities of the stream of consciousness novel in the light of the above critical observations, it becomes evidence that it is essentially psychological in nature and attempts to portray “the individual’s reaction to any given situation determined by the sum of his past experiences.”^{xxxviii} It marks a

withdrawal from the outer world into the innermost regions of human personality. Another aspect of this fiction is that it has no plot in the accepted sense of the word. There is no story-interest or dramatic conflict as it can be seen in the traditional novels. There is no attempt at characterization. The valiant hero, the lovable heroine and the hideous villain are dead. There average individual is presented without any effort on the part of the novelist either to magnify or distort him. The contents are unfolded through 'interior monologues' in which the characters' thoughts are presented in a seemingly illogical and incoherent manner as they occur at the pre-speech level in their consciousness. The story is unfolded mainly through such interior monologues of the characters themselves, restricting the role of the omniscient author to the minimum. In keeping with the subjective nature of narrative technique, chronological sequence in the presentation of thoughts, time and events is discarded. The style is unique and does not conform to the existing syntactical norms, containing mostly a mixture of hemistiches and long sentences, and seldom punctuated, indicating the endless flow of thoughts. The themes are concerned mainly with the portrayal of the flickering half shades of the characters' consciousness. The stream of consciousness writers tend to portray a personal vision sans moral or social implications. It comes very close to poetry rather than fiction in the sense that it abounds in symbols and myths. In short, being the offspring of philosophy and psychology that it is, it makes very difficult reading and is often aimed at the educated and elite rather than the common reader who reads fiction for entertainment or instruction.

William James's phrase 'the stream of consciousness' was first applied to refer to the new technique by May Sinclair, a novelist herself, while examining the narrative technique of Dorothy Richardson, an English novelist. But Dorothy Richardson, though a pioneer in this field, was not the originator of this form. It was Edourd Dujardin, a minor French novelist, who originated this form in 1887 with his *Les Lauriers Sont coupes*, published in English as *We'll to the Woods No More*. In fact, Joyce borrowed the 'interior monologue' technique only from him: "Dujardin's original experiment is something less than sensational. *Les Lauriers Sont Coupes* is the sustained monologue in the present tense without incident or consequence, of a naïve young man taking a beautiful actress out to dinner, interrupted by occasional fragments of dialogue and few necessary stage-directions in third person. However, he became famous after the publication of his article "*Le Itnerieur Monologue*" in 1931, in which he reviewed James Joyce's use of the stream of consciousness technique in *Ulysses* which was an outstanding exploitation of his own interior monologue device.

Though Dujardin had initiated the move, it was Marcel Proust, another French novelist and Henri Bergson's student, who conducted bold experiments in the light of the new developments in philosophy, thereby influencing many writers like Dorothy Richardson and James Joyce. In his seven volume novel *La Recherche*

Pu Temps Perdu written between 1913 and 1927, and later translated into English as **Remembrance of Things Past**, he records the inner life his protagonist Marcel, who is an autobiographical character. “**Remembrance of Things Past** is not a novel of traditional form. Symphonic in design, it unfolds without plot or crisis as the writer reveals in retrospect the motifs of his experience, holds them for thematic effect, and drops them, only to return to them once more in the process of recurrence and change. This varied pattern of experience brings together a series of involved relationships through the imagination and observation of a narrator engaged in tracing with painstaking detail his perceptions of people and places as he himself grows from childhood to disillusioned middle age.”^{xxxix}

Thus, the stream of consciousness novel is the product of various developments in psychology, philosophy, history and literature that occurred during the last part of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. It would be most appropriate to conclude this article quoting Haines who sums up the genesis of this new novel in a nutshell:

Modern psychology is a manifestation of science; but it is an independent, pervasive, and dominating influence in the development of fiction. The whole art and substance of the novel have taken on new dimensions, have been charged with new energies, as the study of psychology in theory and practice, has penetrated more and more deeply into the mystery of the human mind. From the concepts and doctrines of William James, Freud, and Jung a generation of novelists has drawn inexhaustible materials and evolved varied, subtle and bizarre methods of handling them. The continuous flowing current of consciousness, the experimental timelessness, of immediate perception, the sex instinct as a motor and motive of the unconscious, the complexes and inhibitions that are attributes of a multifold personality in conflict with itself, and the indeterminateness of the border line between normality and abnormality – these are tenets of psychology or psychoanalysis that have been objectified for the common reader by the work of Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf, D.H.Lawrence, Dos Passos, Faulkner, and a multitude of others.^{xl}

ⁱ K.C.Keshav Rao, **The Philosophical Foundations of Literature** (Mangalore: Mohan Enterprises, 1987), p.i.

ⁱⁱ Quoted by A. Philips Griffiths, ed. **Philosophy and Literature** (London: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp.5,6.

ⁱⁱⁱ Binayendranath Ray, “Pragmatism,” **History of Philosophy: Eastern and Western** Vol ii ed. Radhakrishnan et al. (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.,

1967), p.340.

iv William James, **The Principles of Psychology** (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1918), p.224.

Hereafter cited as William James.

v William James, p.225.

vi William James, p.235.

vii William James, p.230.

viii Gerald E. Myers, **William James : Life and Thought** (London : Yale University Press, 1986), p.144.

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