

The Stream of consciousness Novel.
or
The Psychological Novel.

One of the most important developments in the technique of the modern novel is the 'stream of Consciousness'. The phrase stream of consciousness was first used by 'William James' in 'Principles of Psychology' to denote the chaotic flow of impressions and sensations through human consciousness. This particular kind of novel is also called the subjective novel or the psychological novel. According to Friedman, the stream of consciousness is a large body of such experiments in technique and method as the interior monologue, the internal analysis and the sensory impression. In the words of David Daiches, 'The Stream of consciousness's technique is a means of escape from the tyranny of the time dimension.'

The rise of the Stream of consciousness technique in the hands of writers such as James Joyce, Dorothy Richardson and Virginia Woolf on the eve of the First World War marks the beginning of a new epoch in the realm of English fiction, and owes its origin to various contributory forces. The psychological writings of William James and Henry Bergson, the psycho-analysis researches of Freud, Adler and Jung, the scientific thesis of Max and Einstein, the post- impressionistic paintings, surrealism and the techniques of music directly or indirectly influenced the stream of consciousness technique. The symbolist movement also left its impression on the Stream of Consciousness Method.

The novelists of the Stream of Consciousness disapprove of the logical pattern imposed arbitrarily on life and character and insists on the need to portray fluidity of human Consciousness that defies the barriers of time and logic. This kind of novel is largely concerned with the pre-speech level of consciousness which lacks coherent pattern and is not rationally controlled. Human consciousness is like an ice-berge a large part of which remains hidden below the surface of the sea. The novelist of this school turned fiction away from external to internal reality. Their novels reflect the tendency towards subjectivity and introspection and a growing interest in the inmost recesses of human consciousness. They retreat from 'the great without' to portray 'the great within.'

In order to portray the human consciousness, the novelist has to associate ideas of his characters. The pattern of the association of ideas depends on the individual's past experience and present and future dreams and aspirations. So, the novelist fuses together the past, present and future of his characters. He flashes back, he looks before, the past, present and future of his characters. He flashes back, he looks before, he shifts backwards and forwards.

The first modern novelist who consciously employed the Stream of Consciousness technique was Dorothy Richardson. Her 'Pointed Roofs' may be said to be the first novel written in this technique, is the first of the series of novels known as Pilgrimage which present the mental history of Miriam Henderson, whose response to life enable Richardson to convey the very sense of life.

James Joyce 'a prodigious creative mind' employed the Stream of Consciousness technique in his multi-dimensional novel 'Ulysses'. Ulysses is not only a guide book to the city 'Dublin' and a criticism of modern life with its 'sick, hurry and divided aims' but also a parody of Homer's 'Odyssey'.

A far more exciting use of the Stream of Consciousness technique was made by Virginia Woolf. She wrote four remarkable Stream of Consciousness novels __ Mrs. Dalloway, 'To The Light House', 'The Waves and Between the Acts'.

The excessive novelty of the Stream of Consciousness fiction has often baffled critical opinion. Wells detested its 'copious emptiness,' Herbert Read was distressed by its 'terrible fluidity'. Most of the architects of this kind of novel suffered physically or mentally. James Joyce had a weak eye-sight, Richardson was a victim of myopia and Mrs. Woolf suffered from madness and killed herself in a mad frenzy.

However, the psychological novel had added a new dimension to fiction. It has explored a new realm of experience and revealed the amazing depths and fluidity of human of human consciousness. It has also given a new technique and new style.