CHAPTER V: STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS TECHNIQUE IN
JAMES JOYCE AND VIRGINIA WOOLF:
A COMPARISON
Though Virginia Woolf was not one of the architects of the stream of consciousness novel, she has made her own contribution to it. Her peculiar contribution to the novel of subjectivity lay in her awareness that she could obtain given effects of experience by a constant search for the condition of poetry. The influence of James Joyce upon her is much more profound than is generally believed, says Leon Edel. Virginia Woolf considered *Ulysses* a transcendent work, long before it was published. There were many aspects of the technique of *Ulysses* that appealed to Virginia Woolf. The stream of consciousness method so useful in breaking down the distinction between subject and object and in suggesting rather than describing the states of mind, must have impressed her in Joyce. Breaking down distinctions and suggesting rather than stating were two important ways of creating the 'luminous halo', the 'semi-transparent envelop' which surrounds the individual from the beginning of consciousness to the end. She wrote at the time *Ulysses* appeared:

Anyone who had read *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* or, what promises to be a far more interesting work, *Ulysses*, now appearing in the *Little Review*, will have hazarded some theory... as to *Mr Joyce's* intention. On our part, with such a fragment before us, it is hazarded rather than affirmed; but whatever the intention of the whole, there can be no question but that is
of the utmost sincerity and that the result, difficult or unpleasant as we may judge it, is undeniably important. In contrast with those whom we have called materialists Mr Joyce is spiritual; he is concerned at all costs to reveal the flickerings of that innermost flame which flashes its messages through the brain, and in order to preserve it he disregards with complete courage whatever seems to him adventitious, whether it be probability, or coherence or any other of these signposts which for generations have served to support the imagination of a reader when called upon to imagine what he can neither touch nor see. The scene in the cemetery, for instance, with its brilliancy, its sordidity, its incoherence, its sudden lightening flashes of significance, does undoubtedly come so close to the quick of the mind that, on a first reading at any rate, it is difficult not to acclaim a masterpiece. If we want life itself, surely we have it.  

A study of the novels of Virginia Woolf and James Joyce allows the discovery of the fundamental differences and similarities in their presentation of stream of consciousness. They differ in their purposes. Joyce's aim was to isolate reality from all human attitudes. His was an attempt to remove the normative element from fiction completely and then to create a self-contained world independent of all values in the observer and of all values in the creator. But Virginia Woolf refines on values rather than eliminates

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them. When Virginia Woolf said that 'Joyce is spiritual', she meant that Joyce had shown himself by his method of writing that he is dissatisfied with the existing norms. This dissatisfaction resulted in spiritualization of experience and in meditative refinement of events. David Daiches says that, if the immediate purposes of James Joyce and Virginia Woolf were very different, their ultimate purposes were perhaps the same — to find a solution to the all important value problem.

In their presentation of stream of consciousness, both James Joyce and Virginia Woolf used the method of direct interior monologue, indirect interior monologue, omniscient description and soliloquy. James Joyce successfully used interior monologue in his novels for presenting the psychic content and processes of his characters. This interior monologue is partly or entirely unuttered as these processes of characters exist at various levels of conscious control before they are formulated for deliberate speech. Joyce has used direct and indirect interior monologue separately in different contexts, all over in the same novel. Virginia Woolf mostly uses indirect interior monologue and sometimes the combination of both direct and indirect interior monologue. The direct interior monologue is one in which there is no author-interference. There is either a complete
or near-complete disappearance of the author from the page. And there is no auditor assumed — that is the character is not speaking to anyone with the fictional scene.

Joyce gives in the last chapter of *Ulysses*, the most famous and the most extended and skilful direct interior monologue — which represents the meanderings of the consciousness of Molly Bloom while she is lying in bed. She has been awakened by the late coming home of her husband Leopold Bloom, who is lying asleep beside her.

Yes because he never did a thing like that before as ask to get his breakfast in bed with a couple of eggs since the City Arms hotel when he used to be pretending to be laid up with a sick voice doing his highness to make himself interesting to that old faggot Mrs Riordan that he thought he had a great leg of and she never left us a farthing all for masses for herself and her soul greatest miser ever was actually afraid to lay out 4d for her methylated spirit telling me all her ailments .... 2

In this passage the elements of incoherence and fluidity are emphasized by the complete absence of punctuation, of pronoun references, and of introductions to the persons and events Molly is thinking about, and by the frequent interruption of one idea by another. Here, the character is no more represented as speaking to the reader or even

for his benefit than she is represented as speaking to
another character in the scene. Here what is represented
is the flow of Molly's consciousness. As the monologue
progresses, it recedes to deeper levels of consciousness
until Molly falls asleep, and the novel ends as the
monologue ends. There is no authorial comment; it is in
first person, the tense is willy-nilly, past, imperfect,
present or conditional as Molly's mind dictates. There is
no stage direction from the author. Thus Joyce here makes
use of a sheer direct interior monologue.

Virginia Woolf mostly uses indirect monologue.
Sometimes she makes a combined use of direct and indirect
interior monologues. The following passage from *Mrs Dalloway*
illustrates her technique.

Mrs Dalloway said she would buy the
flowers herself.

For Lucy had her work cut out for her.
The doors would be taken off their hinges;
Rumpelmayer's men were coming. And then,
thought Clarissa Dalloway, what a morning —
fresh as if issued to children on a beach.

What a lark! What a plunge! For so it had
always seemed to her when, with a little squeak
of the hinges, which she could hear now, she
had burst open the French windows and plunged
at Bourton into the open air. How fresh, how
calm, stiller than this of course, the air was
in the early morning; like the flap of a wave;
the kiss of a wave; chill and sharp and yet
(for a girl of eighteen as she then was)
solemn, feeling as she did, standing there at the open window, that something awful was about to happen; looking at the flowers, at the trees with the smoke winding off them and the rooks rising, falling; standing and looking until Peter Walsh said, 'Musing among the vegetables?'—was that it?—'I prefer men to cauliflowers'—was that it? He must have said it at breakfast one morning when she had gone out on to the terrace—Peter Walsh. He would be back from India one of these days .... 3

A comparison of this passage with the previously cited monologue of Molly Bloom, shows the differences and the similarities of Joyce's and Virginia Woolf's technique. The selection from Virginia Woolf is much more coherent than is the one from James Joyce. Virginia Woolf's passage is much more conventional in appearance than is James Joyce's. Virginia Woolf does not present the consciousness directly for she is present as the omniscient author with her comments directing the reader. A closer observation reveals two striking similarities. There is a studied element of incoherence in both the passages. The references and meanings are intentionally vague and unexplained. In both the passages, there is an element of disunity, of wandering from a single subject. The two similarities place both of the passages as possible excerpts from

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stream of consciousness novels. The two dissimilarities indicate they are different techniques within the stream of consciousness genre.

Of course, James Joyce also uses indirect interior monologue, though not as much as Virginia Woolf does. In the 'Nausicaa' episode of *Ulysses*, one gets an example of Joyce's use of indirect interior monologue. This passage concerns the flirtation of Gerty MacDowell with Leopold Bloom. The reader enters the consciousness of Gerty, from whose point of view the episode is represented. Gerty is sitting on a rock near the seashore. Below her on the beach are her friends playing. Some distance away from her on the bridge is Leopold Bloom, watching her. Across the way an open-air dedicatory Mass is being celebrated.

... Canon O'Hanlon handed the thurible back to Father Conroy and knelt down looking up at the Blessed Sacrament and the choir began to sing Tantum ergo and she just swung her foot in and out of time as the music rose and fell to the 'Tantum erga cramen tumb'. Three and eleven she paid for those stockings in Sparrow's of George's street on the Tuesday, no the Monday before Easter and there wasn't a brack on them and that was what he was looking at, transparent, and not at her insignificant ones that had neither shape nor form (the cheek of her !) because he had eyes in his head to see the difference for himself. 4

Through the parody of a sentimental fiction, Joyce gives an apparent interpretation, without any attempt to conceal himself from the reader, of Gerty's daydream consciousness.

Here is a far more direct representation than a mere
description of Gerty's consciousness.

The appearance of the author is more frequent and
necessary in monologues of psychologically complex characters,
or in those which depict a deeper level of consciousness.
Here is another example of this variation handled by Joyce
in presenting, in *Ulysses*, Stephen Dedalus' consciousness.

Woodshadows floated silently by through
the morning peace from the stairhead
seaward where he gazed. Inshore and
farther out the mirror of water whitened,
spurned by lightshod hurrying feet. White
breast of the dim sea. The twining stresses,
two by two. A hand plucking the harpstrings
merging their twining chords. Lavewhite wedded
words shimmering on the dim tide. 5

This monologue continues for more than a page until
Stephen is interrupted in his reverie by his friend,
Buck Mulligan. During that monologue, the author appears
at two other points, each time more subtly. It is notable
that the manner in which the author appears in this
monologue is such that it would be scarcely perceptible
to a casual reader that he is there at all. The language
of the author fuses into the language of the character.
Actually it becomes impossible, even after close analysis,
to be certain of the precise point at which the character's

5 Ibid., p. 9.
consciousness begins to be represented. But it is Virginia Woolf who is more successful in producing subtle effect through the use of indirect interior monologue.

Both James Joyce and Virginia Woolf use the cinematic device of Montage. Among the secondary devices that come within cinematic device are 'multiple view', 'show-ups', 'fade outs', 'cutting', 'closeups', 'panorama' and 'flash backs'. They use it because the quality of consciousness itself demands a movement that is not rigid clock progression.

In the already cited opening passages of Mrs Dalloway, the basic method of indirect interior monologue is used to present Clarissa Dalloway to the reader. We stay within Clarissa's consciousness for the first sixteen pages, except for a brief paragraph. First, Clarissa thinks of preparation for a party in the immediate future, then she shifts to the present moment and considers what a fine morning it is. There is a 'flash-back' over twenty years in which Mrs Dalloway thinks of the fine days at Bourton; still in the past, but on a specific day she recalls a conversation with Peter Walsh in minute detail. Then follows a vision in the near future of Peter Walsh's proposed visit to London. At this point, the device of 'multiple view' is employed and the reader
leaves Clarissa's consciousness for a few lines to enter that of a stranger who observes Clarissa crossing the street. Back in Clarissa's stream the reader finds her contemplating, in the present moment, her love for Westminster; there is a 'fade out' of her sentimental musings and she recalls the previous evening's conversation about the War being over; this in turn 'fades out' and the reader is back with her joy at being part of London at the present moment. Here the principle of 'cutting' is used to present a brief conversation Clarissa has with Hugh Whitbread whom she meets on the street. The conversation 'fades out' to lose itself in Clarissa's stream of consciousness again while she is concerned with various aspects of the Whitbreeds. The time quickly shifts from an indefinite past, to the present moment, to the immediate future and then to the far past. Still in the far past Clarissa thinks of Petter and Hugh at Bourton; then again of the fine weather at the present moment which 'fades out' to the thoughts of Clarissa's own 'divine vitality' as she knew herself in the indefinite past.

The "Wandering Rocks", episode in Ulysses consists of eighteen scenes taking place in various parts of Dublin. Joyce carefully makes cross references of minor details to indicate that the scenes take place approximately at the
same time. It is a superb example of space montage. In one of the scenes of the episode, for example, Leopold Bloom is presented as looking at mildly pornographic literature in a bookshop in order to find a novel to present to his wife. The reader gets the glimpse into his unuttered thoughts.

Mr Bloom, alone, looked at the titles. 'Fair Tyrants' by James Lovebirch. Know the kind that is. Had it? Yes. He opened it. Thought so.

A woman's voice behind the dingy curtain. Listen : The man. No : she wouldn't like that much. Got her it once.
He read the other title : 'Sweets of Sin'. More in her line. Let us see.
He read where his finger opened.
- All the dollarbills her husband gave her were spent in the stores on wondrous gowns and costliest frillies. For him ! For Raoul ! Yes. This. Here. Try.
- Her mouth glued on his in a luscious voluptuous kiss while his hands felt for the opulent curves inside her deshabille. Yes. Take this. The end. 6

The scene is 'cut' after a few more lines and shifts to an auction in another part of Dublin. The secondary cinematic device which comes to greatest use in this episode is that of 'cutting'. This 'camera eye' method of presenting stream of consciousness enables Joyce to give the reader a glimpse into a single aspect of Bloom’s psyche. It explains to the

6 Ibid., pp. 235-236.
reader images and phrases which constantly crop up in Bloom's monologue throughout the remaining part of the day. Raoul's bold romance in 'Sweats of Sin' haunts and tempts and even becomes a symbol for poor cuckolded Leopold Bloom.

Despite the admirable way in which all this is done, it is Virginia Woolf who uses the device of space-montage most effectively so far as the purposes of stream of consciousness fiction are concerned.

It ought to be stated that whereas Joyce is the great virtuoso of the technique, it is Virginia Woolf in *Mrs Dalloway* and in *To The Lighthouse* who blends it most expertly and effectively with other stream of consciousness techniques. Joyce utilizes space-montage as his basic technique and superimposes interior monologue on it; Virginia Woolf maintains her basic interior monologue method and superimposes montage on it. 7

James Joyce explains his own conception of art as an epiphany, 'a sudden spiritual manifestation' which enables the artist to have a deep insight into the lives of others, and by capturing some of the most delicate and 'evanescent' of moments the artist can get a clue to the meaning of human life as a whole. Joyce's writing is a texture of epiphanies and the basic pattern in most of his major works

is a chronological cycle tracing man's life from childhood and youth to maturity. The basic meaning of epiphany is appearance or manifestation and the word is related to a verb meaning to display or show forth or to shine forth. This theory developed in part from Joyce's linguistic interests, in that his concern with words as symbols led to a concern with reproducing both the reality of an event and its symbolic or spiritual meaning. Joyce describes how a commonplace incident which seemed a symbol of Irish paralysis made Stephen think of collecting many such moments together in a book of epiphanies. Joyce says that by 'epiphany' Stephen meant a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself. And that Stephen believed it was for the man of letters to record these epiphanies with extreme care, seeing that they are the most delicate and evanescent of moments. Taken as 'manifestation', the word reflects the sense of revelation of inner significance by means of outward appearance. This theory of epiphany is, for Joyce, bound up intimately with the three cardinal principles of Aquinas. They are 'integritas', 'consonantia' and 'claritas'. Stephen Dedalus explains this in a pseudo-scholastic manner thus:

Aquinas says: 'ad pulcritudinem tria requiruntur, integritas, consonantia, claritas.' I translate it so: Three
things are needed for beauty, wholeness, harmony and radiance. Do these correspond to the phases of apprehension?
Are you following?

- Of course, I am, said Lynch. If you think I have an excrementitious intelligence run after Donovan and ask him to listen to you.

Stephen pointed to a basket which a butcher boy had slung inverted on his head.
- Look at that basket, he said.
- I see it, said Lynch.
- In order to see that basket, said Stephen your mind first of all separates the basket from the rest of the visible universe which is not the basket. The first phase of apprehension is a bounding line drawn about the object to be apprehended. An esthetic image is presented to us either in space or in time. What is audible is presented in time, what is visible is presented in space. But, temporal or spatial, the esthetic image is first luminously apprehended as selfbounded and selfcontained upon the immeasurable background of space or time which is not it. You apprehend it as one thing. You see it as one whole. You apprehend its wholeness. That is integritas.
- Bull's eye! said Lynch, laughing. Go on.
- Then, said Stephen, you pass from point to point, led by its formal lines; you apprehend it as balanced part against part within its limits; you feel the rhythm of its structure. In other words the synthesis of immediate perception is followed by the analysis of apprehension. Having first felt that it is 'one' thing you feel now that it is a 'thing'. You apprehend it as complex, multiple, divisible, separable, made up of its parts, the result of its parts and their sum, harmonious. That is 'consonantia'.

- Bull's eye again! said Lynch wittily. Tell me now what is 'claritas' and you win the cigar.
- The connotation of the word, Stephen said, is rather vague. Aquinas uses a term which seems to be inexact. It baffled me for a long time. It would lead you to believe that he had in mind symbolism
or idealism, the supreme quality of beauty being a light from some other world, the idea of which the matter is but the shadow, the reality of which it is but the symbol. I thought he might mean that 'claritas' is the artistic discovery and representation of the divine purpose in anything or a force of generalisation which would make the esthetic image a universal one, make it outshine its proper conditions. But that is literary talk. I understand it so. When you have apprehended that basket as one thing and have then analysed it according to its form and apprehended it as a thing you make the only synthesis which is logically and esthetically permissible. You see that it is that thing which it is and no other thing. The radiance of which he speaks is the scholastic quiditas, the whiteness of a thing. This supreme quality is felt by the artist when the esthetic image is first conceived in his imagination. The mind in that mysterious instant Shelley likened beautifully to a fading coal. The instant wherein that supreme quality of beauty, the clear radiance of the esthetic image, is apprehended luminously by the mind which has been arrested by its wholeness and fascinated by its harmony is the luminous silent stasis of esthetic pleasure, a spiritual state very like to that cardiac condition which the Italian physiologist Luigi Galvani, using a phrase almost as beautiful as Shelley's, called the enchantment of the heart.

Joyce's theory of 'epiphany' seems to parallel Virginia Woolf's notion of reality as revealing itself in unexpected visionary flashes. In a passage in *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Woolf elaborates her theory of what may be called 'evanescent reality'.

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What is meant by 'reality'? It would seem to be something very erratic, very undependable - now to be found in a dusty road, now in a scrap of newspaper in the street, now a daffodil in the sun. It lights up a group in a room and stamps some casual saying. It overwhelms one walking home beneath the stars and makes the silent world more real than the world of speech - and then there is again an omnibus in the uproar of Piccadilly. Sometimes, too, it seems to dwell in shapes too far away for us to discern what their nature is. But whatever it touches, it fixes and makes permanent. That is what remains over when the skin of the day has been cast into the hedges; that is what is left of past time and of our loves and hates. Now the writer, as I think, has the chance to live more than other people in the presence of this reality. It is his business to find it and collect it and communicate it to the rest of us.

While illustrating her view of 'reality', Virginia Woolf stresses the importance of 'intuition' in creative writing. It is therefore easy to recognize a certain correspondence between Virginia Woolf's 'evanescent reality' and Proust's 'intuition' and Bergson's 'I intuition philosophique' and Joyce's 'epiphany'. Epiphany parallels intuition. In the Portrait, Stephen Dedalus drops the term 'epiphany' and uses its more familiar form, intuition. It is through an intuitional awareness that Stephen hopes some day to

apprehend reality in a flash of aesthetic vision:

he wanted to meet in the real world
the unsubstantial image which his soul
so constantly beheld. He did not know
where to seek it or how, but a premonition
which led him on told him that this image
would, without any overt act of his,
encounter him. 11

And in that 'magic moment' he would be completely
transformed. This 'intuition' seems to represent Stephen's
earlier concept of epiphany, and in this sense embrace
every transcendental awareness of phenomena. Such moments
of 'little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck
unexpectedly in the dark' 12 are transitory. And an artist
like Lily Briscoe could remain in a perpetual state of
intuitive perception. In To The Lighthouse, Virginia Woolf
endows Mrs Ramsay and Lily Briscoe with 'intuitive' wisdom
and warmth. Lily Briscoe has the illusion of the loving
presence of Mrs Ramsay. For the creation of Mrs Ram'say's
picture, Lily Briscoe depends on her intuitive vision of
Mrs Ramsay.

The whole mass of the picture was
poised upon that weight. Beautiful
and bright it should be on the surface,
feathery and evanescent, one colour

11 James Joyce, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,
p. 65.

12 Virginia Woolf, To The Lighthouse (London: The Hogarth
melting into another like the
colours on a butterfly’s wing; but
beneath the fabric must be clamped
together with bolts of iron. It was
to be a thing you could ruffle with
your breath; and a thing you could not
dislodge with a team of horses. And she
began to lay on a red, a grey, and she
began to model her way into the hollow
there. At the same time, she seemed
to be sitting beside Mrs Ramsay on the
beach. 13

Again there is Lily’s intuitive awareness skilfully revealed:

Mrs Ramsay sat silent. She was glad,
Lily thought, to rest in silence,
uncommunicative; to rest in the extreme
obscurity of human relationships. Who
knows what we are, what we feel? Who
knows even at the moment of intimacy,
This is knowledge? Aren’t things
spoilt then, Mrs Ramsay may have asked
(it seemed to have happened so often,
this silence by her side) by saying
them? Aren’t we more expressive thus?
The moment at least seemed extraordinarily
fertile. She rammed a little hole in the
sand and covered it up, by way of burying
in it the perfection of the moment. It
was like a drop of silver in which one
dipped and illumined the darkness of the past. 14

It is the assurance of the continued presence of the creative
spirit of Mrs Ramsay that gives Lily Briscoe, her final
vision. Lily Briscoe looked at the steps which were empty.
She looked at her canvas; it was blurred. “With a sudden
intensity, as if she saw it clear for a second, she drew

13 Ibid., p. 264.
14 Ibid., pp. 264-265.
a line there, in the centre. It was done; it was
finished. Yes, she thought, laying down her brush in
extreme fatigue. I have had my vision." 15 Lily's
intuitive vision of truth, symbolized by her ability to
finish the painting, is that 'reality' which is synonymous
with harmonious relations - between parents to children,
men to women, man and nature, and past and present. The
destroyer of 'reality' is chaos and people's isolation from
one another. Mrs Ramsay is the ultimate symbol of vitality,
harmony and emotional warmth. When Lily catches this
harmony on the canvas, it is captured for all time.

Thus, obviously James Joyce's epiphany which corresponds
to Proust's intuition' strikes a parallel to Virginia Woolf's
'evanescent reality' which corresponds to intuitive vision.

From James Joyce, Virginia Woolf seems to have acquired
a certain sense of oneness. It is from James Joyce that
Virginia Woolf learned how to give meaning to the
simultaneity of experience. Clarissa Dalloway's day in
London, also a day in June as in Ulysses, begins at nine
in the morning and finishes early the next morning. In
most of Virginia Woolf's fiction, time is reduced to a few
hours. Clarissa Dalloway walks through London. And the
people around her form an encircling wave as she goes to

15 Ibid., p. 320.
Bond Street or strolls along the Green Park, while in the midst of the day the big bronze accents of Big Ben remind us of the ticking of mechanical time while we move in and out of Mrs Dalloway's mind and the minds of the other characters in the story. In the same way in *Ulysses*, when the cuckoo clock strikes nine at the conclusion of the "Nausicaa" episode, we are switched to a different scene between each group of three chimes. The use of the striking clock, with spatially diverse incidents taking place between the first and the last chime, is, perhaps the most obvious device to indicate that the author is pausing in time while moving in space. Thus Virginia Woolf's use of the clocks in *Mrs Dalloway* parallels that of Joyce. The Big Ben and Joyce's cuckoo clock serve exactly the same function, though in *Mrs Dalloway* the clock device is more consistently used than in *Ulysses*.

Virginia Woolf, although her scope is much more limited than James Joyce's, take much more care than Joyce does to put up signposts. When we are staying still in time and moving rapidly through the minds of various characters, Virginia Woolf is very careful to mark those points of time, to see to it that the unifying factor which is holding these quite disparate consciousness together, is made clear to the reader. That is why the clocks of London chime right through the book. When we wander through the
consciousness of different personalities, we are kept from straying, by the time-indications and conversely, when we go up and down in time through the memory of one of the characters, we are kept from straying by the constant reminder of the speaker’s identity. "The sound of Big Ben striking the half-hour struck out between them with extraordinary vigour, as if a young man, strong, indifferent, inconsiderate, were swinging dumb-bells this way and that." 16 Almost every fifteen minutes is indicated by a clock chiming. And these indications of time are most clearly given when the reader is about to go from one personality to another.

Though Virginia Woolf’s indebtedness to James Joyce is great, equally great is her originality. She has her unique contribution to the stream of consciousness novel. She achieves a balance in *Mrs Dalloway*, for the first time between the formlessness and disorder inherent in the stream of consciousness novel. And this form and order are a necessary condition of art. As it is already seen, there is a confrontation of clock time or mechanical time with the psychic or inner time. And the transition from past to the present or from one consciousness to another, is marked by the chiming of Big Ben and other clocks of London. There may be no logical links but there are well marked, clearcut,

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associational and emotional links and in this way her novel does not have the incoherence of *Ulysses*. Joyce uses 'he' in place of the 'I' of the reverie or interior monologue. The 'I' of the interior monologue in Virginia Woolf is an intermediate sort of pronoun, midway between the 'I' and the 'she'. Virginia Woolf uses 'one'. Here the movement is from a suppressed 'I' to a 'one' and then, on account of the necessity of stressing the unifying factor namely the identity of Clarissa Dalloway, to a straight third-person use of, 'Clarissa'. Thus, this makes Virginia Woolf's stream of consciousness more coherent and readable than Joyce's. His novels especially *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* are obscure because of his excessive use of foreign words and phrases and his habit of combining words and writing without punctuation. Joyce does not make a division between phrases and sentences and passes rapidly, without warning, back and forth among the tenses. This makes his novel difficult for the reader. This coherence in Virginia Woolf makes her technique less stream of consciousness.

In *Ulysses*, Joyce recreated the life of an entire city in a fixed period, some eighteen hours, the date 16th June, 1904, from morning to the early hours of the next morning. He was at the same time placing this day in the history of all time, so that it becomes eighteen hours set in all the centuries, indeed in that eternity which is evoked in one of
the sermons in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.*
He would create a microcosm in the cosmos, he would pick up that grain of sand which in all eternity would not even be the merest of mere fragments of the mountain.

You have often seen the sand on the seashore. How fine are its tiny grains! And how many of those tiny little grains go to make up the small handful which a child grasps in its play. Now imagine a mountain of that sand, a million miles high, reaching from the earth to the farthest heavens, and a million miles broad, extending to remotest space, and a million miles in thickness; and imagine such an enormous mass of countless particles of sand multiplied as often as there are leaves in the forest, drops of water in the mighty ocean, feathers on birds, scales on fish, hairs on animals, atoms in the vast expanse of the air; and imagine that at the end of every million years a little bird came to that mountain and carried away in its beak a tiny grain of that sand. How many millions upon millions of centuries would pass before that bird had carried away even a square foot of that mountain, how many eons upon eons of ages before it had carried away all? Yet at the end of that immense stretch of time not even one instant of eternity could be said to have ended. At the end of all those billions and trillions of years eternity would have scarcely begun. 17

This Joyce caught in that nightmare of time and sought to rest a single day from it. Joyce, the half-blind writer who settled in Trieste, Rome, Zurich, wanders without seeing

17 *James Joyce, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,* pp. 131-132.
anything but the vision which he carries within himself, is the setting of the narrow world of his youth. Whether in Navone Square or on the quays of the Seine, or on the shores of a Swiss lake or in an Adriatic port, he still strolls in his native town, around Trinity College, along the lazy banks of the slow Liffey, in the avenues of Phoenix Park, around Wellington and Parnell Monuments, with memories of Swift and Stella, on the strand of the gulf over which reign the castle of Howth and its enchanting ravines full of rhododendrons. He always wanders among the surroundings of his youth, in the streets of his half-real and half-dreamed secret city, this cemetery of past hopes and memories. Dublin has become for him a myth, an earthly Paradise lost and hated, cherished and rediscovered.

The landscape, more or less deformed by memory, provides the elements for a poem — a pub on the water front, a tree, an old rock, the duet of the elm that shivers and the wave that flees, the old castle on its promontory, the sea, evening at twilight. Then on the street behind a donkey, four passers-by who become the Four Old Men, the four masters, the four evangelists. These Big Four changed into apostles like the street posters. Each assumes symbolic existence. Then there are the mountains, rivers — a fluid element, the woman, all women, Anna Livia Plurabelle, grace,
the eternal Feminine.

With Ulysses, Dublin as a city comes fully to life. Here one can catch the glimpses of the urban world that build up into the panorama of what life is like in a twentieth century city. Bloom getting his wife her breakfast or eating his, queueing at the pork-butcher's and casting his eyes on the next-door girl at the counter, goin' to a funeral, drinking in a pub at lunch, going back to work in the afternoon — these are all recognizably a slice of the modern life. Here all kinds of perceptions count; even minor characters are fully realized. And all the time there is the central importance of spoken English, of the ways in which men and women speak to each other and communicate with themselves. It is only through this multiple perceptions of 'reality' that Dublin exists.

The cavalcade passed out by the lower gate of Phoenix Park saluted by obsequious policemen and proceeded past Kingsbridge along the northern quays. The viceroy was most cordially greeted on his way through the metropolis. At Bloody bridge Mr Thomas Kernan beyond the river greeted him vainly from afar. Between Queen's and Whiteworth bridges Lord Dudley's viceroyal carriages passed and were unsaluted by Mr Dudley White, B.L., R.A., who stood on Arran Quay outside Mrs M.C. White's, the pawnbroker's, at the corner of Arran street west stroking his nose with his forefinger, undecided whether he should arrive at Phibsborough more quickly by a triple change of tram or by hailing a car or on foot through Smithfield,
Constitution hill and Broadstone terminus. In the porch of Four Courts Richie Goulding with the coats bag of Goulding, Collis and Ward saw him with surprise. Past Richmond bridge at the doorstep of the office of Reuben J. Dodd, solicitor, agent the Patriotic Insurance Company, an elderly female about to enter changed her plan and retracing her steps by King's windows smiled credulously on the representative of His Majesty. 18

Joyce's perceptions of the city are varied and wide-ranging. He presents a miscellaneous nature of city life. Joyce gives his Dublin an intensely living quality. It is like an element in which the characters live. It pervades them, flows through them all the time, for it is through them as they walk its streets and are aware of its impinging on the periphery of their consciousness.

_Ulysses_ and _Mrs Dalloway_ can be called local novels for the description of the cities given through the consciousness of different characters. _Mrs Dalloway's_ structure seems largely to be modelled on the multiple-scene chapter in _Ulysses_ which is tied together by the progress of the vice-regal cavalcade through Dublin's streets. The reader finds himself in many minds in the streets of London. London is to _Mrs Dalloway_ what Dublin is to Leopold Bloom. But Virginia Woolf's London is a large canvas background with lights cleverly playing over it. Clarissa Dalloway's day in London, also a day in June, as in _Ulysses_, begins.

18 James Joyce, _Ulysses_, p. 252.
at nine in the morning and finishes early the next morning. Mrs Dalloway's mind and that of Septimus Warren Smith hold the centre of the book as did those of Bloom and Dedalus in *Ulysses*.

In *Ulysses*, Bloom and Dedalus are a father and son who meet for a brief moment at the end of a long day symbolically as Odysseus met Telemachus after a lifetime of wanderings. In *Mrs Dalloway*, Clarissa and Septimus Smith seem to be two facets of the same personality. They never actually meet, as Bloom and Dedalus do.

At the outset *Mrs Dalloway* is seen in the London scene. The beginning of the novel makes it clear that for Clarissa Dalloway the city and Westminster in particular, has a profound meaning, a fascination that is not fully explicable in the rational terms, amounting to mystical communication with the locale.

For Heaven only knows why one loves it so, how one sees it so, making it up, building it round one, tumbling it, creating it every moment afresh; but the veriest frumps, the most dejected of miseries sitting on doorsteps (drink their downfall) do the same; can't be dealt with, she felt positive, by Acts of parliament for that very reason: they love life. In people's eyes, in the swing, tramp, and trudge; in the bellow and the uproar; the carriages, motor cars, omnibuses, vans, sandwich men shuffling and swinging; brass bands; barrel organs; in the triumph and the jingle and the
strange high singing of some aeroplane
overhead was what she loved; life;
London; this moment of June. 19

Clarissa Dalloway's walk through London streets on a
fine June morning probably defines and reveals her
social character more suggestively than a detailed
description would do. Peter Walsh on his return from
India, finds London enchanting. The rhythm of the city
makes him feel so young. Every now and then he admires
the triumph of civilization in London with this in mind,
when Septimus is rushed to the hospital, Peter Walsh
notices the ambulance and is impressed by the efficiency
of civilized life.

The whole of Mrs Dalloway conveys poignantly Virginia
Woolf's response to Joyce's success in reflecting how,
in a big city, people's paths cross and dramas go on.
And in spite of innumerable points of superficial contact
and relation, each drama is isolated and each individual
remains locked within walls of private experience. The
novel's brilliance, as writing and as poetry, lies in the
skill with which Virginia Woolf moves from one mind into
another. With remarkable skill and literary virtuosity,
Virginia Woolf conveys inner experience. Her method is

19 Virginia Woolf, Mrs Dalloway, p. 6.
refraction through a kind of high, tense awareness.
There is poetry on every page and a synthesis – a pulling
together of objects and impressions. In addition to Big Ben
heard by London and the people immediately around or near
Mrs Dalloway, they watch an aeroplane sky-writing. The
aeroplane serves to unify the city and the people as the
viceregal cavalcade did in *Ulysses*.

Ah, but that aeroplane! Hadn’t
Mrs Dempster always longed to see foreign
parts? She had a nephew, a missionary.
It soared and shot. She always went on
the sea at Margate, not out o’ sight of
land, but she had no patience with women
who were afraid of water. It swept and
fell. Her stomach was in her mouth.
Up again. There’s a fine young fellow
abroad of it, Mrs Dempster wagered, and
away and away it went, fast and fading,
away and away the aeroplane shot; soaring
over Greenwich and all the masts; over the
little island of grey churches, St. Paul’s
and the rest, till on either side of
London, fields spread out and dark brown
woods where adventurous thrushes, hopping
boldly, glancing quickly, snatched the
snail and tapped him on a stone, once,
twice, thrice. 20

Leon Edel points out that, this is stream of consciousness
writing after the manner of Joyce. There is fascinating
dissociation of experience which Virginia Woolf conveys
to the reader – a matching of incongruities. From the

broad skies we find ourselves swept across a vast city - and fixed on a pin-point. The world appears to be blotted out; the eye leaves the plane to catch a predatory thrush bouncing a snail on a rock. The world can be reduced to a snail - but a snail can also become a pin-point of experience from which the mind moves out into the world. Thus, both for James Joyce and Virginia Woolf external world becomes an 'evanescent reality' they perceive. In their perception they have synthesized the external world or external reality into a microcosm which evidently become a part of their stream of consciousness. Joyce presents a highly detailed picture of Dublin as an 'external' city and the character's impressions are selected according to his pattern. The impressions will be received according to some logic - the mind while receiving impressions, is selective and therefore active. Virginia Woolf's interest in marking out 'the quick of the mind' makes external reference necessary. Emotions and thoughts can be identified only by reference to external objects. It is obvious from their novels that both for James Joyce and Virginia Woolf this external reality is a necessity. Though their main concern is to depict the psychic life of their characters and in achieving this they try to break the differences between the inner and the outer.
One of the striking features of Joyce’s style is the unusual fluidity with which it turns from the outer to the inner world. It is a style capable of rendering sense impressions directly as they fall upon the mind and of showing how these impressions give rise to a chain of association within the mind. The ease and clarity with which these two facets of reality are depicted is amazing. 21

when the external object is viewed by the artist, its soul leaps from its ‘appearance’ and becomes ‘radiant’ and thus it is epiphanyed.

Virginia Woolf tried to catch the shower of innumerable atoms, the vision of life, the iridescence, the luminous halo. She says: “Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness.” 22

Virginia Woolf’s technique achieves its maturity in The Waves. The novel consists entirely of a series of internal soliloquies spoken in turn by each of the six main characters. The narrative method is totally objective, consisting of no more than the identification of the


speaker. The style of the novel is lyrical and its stream of consciousness allows the reader to perceive the internal reality of the characters — both conscious and subconscious reality — rather completely. Its extensive presentation of internal reality makes the problem of understanding external reality in the world of the novel even more complex, since the reader must piece together actual character and actual plot from a series of psychological impressions presented by Bernard, Neville, Louis, Rhoda, Susan, and Jinny. The six characters have no life apart from their lyrical soliloquies. The reader knows nothing about the characters, their family, their age or the site of their homes. The characters have been reduced to symbols, prose has fused almost completely with poetry. As E.M. Forster remarks, in *The Waves* Virginia Woolf is a poet who wants to write something as near to a novel as possible.

James Joyce achieves his perfection and fullest development of his stream of consciousness technique in *Finnegans Wake*. Even in *Ulysses*, Joyce’s presence is always felt as a stabilizing influence on the onsurge of impressionistic detail. In *Finnegans Wake* everything seems to desert rational control. The language is distorted beyond the point of recognition. *Finnegans Wake* is a poem of sleep. It is the dream of the human race itself. The entire
universe is cleverly concealed behind the mask of the 'Allfather' with his mystical letters 'H.C.E'.

_Finnegans Wake_ resembles Virginia Woolf's _The Waves_ in its poetic style. Both the novels can be described as prose-poems. In the final stage of the development of their technique, Joyce and Virginia Woolf achieve the condition of poetry in their novels.

As in the poetic drama so in their novels, Joyce and Virginia Woolf suggest much more than they directly describe or assert. In their novels the basic conflict of life, like the conflict between life and death, hope and despair, love and hate, social contact and freedom, contemplation and action, human misery and exquisite beauty and joy of life are all suggested through imagery, symbol and rhythm. Both novelists have given a narrow frame work to their novels, in order to impart shape and coherence to what is in its very nature, chaotic.

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