Stream of consciousness novel is the record of the inner life of man. It explores the 'prespeech levels' of consciousness which are not censored, not rationally controlled and not logically ordered. The representation of these levels of consciousness necessarily implies the reduction of all experiences to the same importance. The individual consciousness is subjective and fluid. The attempt of James Joyce and Virginia Woolf was to present to the reader this fluidity, this subjective life.

Kenneth Walker has distinguished different levels of consciousness, the study of which will enable one to a deeper understanding of the stream of consciousness writings of James Joyce and Virginia Woolf: (1) the level of deep sleep devoid of all dreams; (2) lighter sleep troubled by dreams; (3) the ordinary level of consciousness, the state of waking sleep, maintained during the day; (4) the state of true self-awareness which we may seldom attain even momentarily; (5) the highest level of cosmic or universal consciousness, that is a state of Supra-Consciousness. The fourth and fifth states of consciousness do not occur automatically and they are comparatively rare experiences. These different levels of consciousness taken as consciousness as a whole, seem to correspond to James Joyce's epiphany or revelation which in its turn parallels Virginia Woolf's
sense impressions, revelation, intuition or evanescence of experience. Consciousness has been equated with 'thought' in the West. "Consciousness is an awareness of our various activities at the moment at which they are occurring in us." ¹

The new concept of time as a continuous flow rather than as a series of separate points, a concept independently enunciated in France, in Henry Bergson's concept of la durée, and in America by William James with his interest in the continuity of consciousness - both helped to produce the modern psychological novel. This led to the suspicion of the old kind of plot which carried the characters forward from moment to moment in a precise chronological sequence, instead, there developed the kind of narrative texture that moved backward and forward with a new freedom to capture the sense of time as it actually operates in the human consciousness of it. This new view of time was closely linked to the theories of Freud and Jung, concentrating on the fact of the multiplicity of consciousness, the presence in the given consciousness of all it had ever experienced and perhaps also of all that the race had experienced. The individual personality is the sum of the individual's memories. The past exists

always in the present, colouring and determining the nature of the present response, and to tell the truth about a character's reaction to any situation we must tell the whole truth about everything that has ever happened to him.

James Joyce and Virginia Woolf have been influenced by this view of time and consciousness. So, they sought ways of communicating to the reader the simultaneity of different levels of consciousness and they also seem to realize that the whole truth about a person can be told by probing into his or her past through presenting the full texture of present consciousness. This resulted in the new fictional technique, namely stream of consciousness technique.

This concern with individual consciousness, its multiplicity and ability to store up the whole of the individual's past history which is relevant and always in operation in one way or another, leads to an emphasis on the individual's loneliness. Each individual is the prisoner of his own private consciousness, his unique train of association, which results from his own unique past. The signals or gestures each individual flashes to the public world are bound to be in some degree misunderstood by that world, because every other person will read them in the
light of that person's own private history. Man's society is in a sense unreal and its institutions inevitably blunt and coarsen the truth about the individual self. Loneliness is seen as the necessary condition of man. Yet the desire to communicate is also a deeply imbedded human instinct, and the desire to escape from loneliness is one of the chief human preoccupations. The characters in Joyce's *Ulysses* are shown as drinking with each other in bars - and communal drinking is one of the most primal gestures of community - making contact with each other through social gestures. At the same time the characters in *Ulysses* are shown as haunted by private thoughts and emotions, the product of their individual past, which cannot be reflected in the social gesture. Social conventions are empty and mechanical, bearing no relationship to the inner life of man. Stephen Dedalus in the *Portrait* is seen as seeking isolation through his own self-imposed exile. Clarissa Dalloway in *Mrs Dalloway* is lonely, she reserves her spiritual privacy by marrying Richard Dalloway who would not intrude upon her 'attic'. Yet Clarissa is seen searching for means of communicating with others - she arranges a party in the evening and at the party the climax occurs. Parties bring people together, yet the unity they impose is superficial and each one is lonelier in a profound sense. Clarissa
refused to accept Peter Walsh for he would dominate her personality. Richard gives her freedom but this freedom suggested loneliness too, and she is haunted by images of herself in a lonely tower cut off from the cheerful conversation and activities of the people outside. At one point she wonders whether one would become part of all other people in death. In *Mrs Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf explores other aspects of loneliness and community, presenting in the madness and suicide of Septimus Warren Smith, the dilemma of a man who through his war experience, has lost all sense of the reality of the world of other people. When he is forced by the civilized society by engaging in meaningless community gestures, Septimus takes to the final extremity.

Stephen Dedalus in the *Portrait* has been a spiritual exile from his social surroundings, since early childhood. He feels equally isolated from the church and religion. In spite of his 'little runs now and then' in the football game at Clongowes, he remains always on the 'fringe' of any corporate life and an exile within his own country. Thus the concern with individual consciousness leads to the concept of individual's loneliness.

As stream of consciousness novelists, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf do not give any set description of characters
as in the older novels. There is a shift from the external to the inner-self of the various personages. In their novels, there is no plot construction in the sense of a logical arrangement of incidents and events leading chronologically to a catastrophe or dénouement. The action moves backward and forward in time. Both Joyce and Virginia Woolf were convinced that the sense of life is often best rendered by an abrupt passing from one series of events, one group of characters, one centre of consciousness to another. They present actions in fragments and leave to the reader whose imagination has the faculty of filling up the gaps in an action presented in fragments, of getting the impression of an entire life from a mere hinting indication of high moments. The imagination is stimulated and rendered more active, by broken bits of information.

The stream of consciousness novel arose to meet the needs of a new age. Pre-occupation with time, subjectivity, inwardness, absence of action, plot and catastrophe and the delineation of the sub-conscious are some of the important characteristics of stream of consciousness novel. The technique of using interior monologue for presenting the human soul, is not entirely new invention of the twentieth century. It is foreshadowed in the novels of Richardson, Sterne, Smollett, George Eliot and many others.
But as a conscious technique it was used on a large scale only under the impact of the teachings of modern psychologists.

When Virginia Woolf took to writing novels, the novel of subjectivity had already become a literary commonplace. The works of Proust, Dorothy Richardson and James Joyce influenced Virginia Woolf greatly.

Both James Joyce and Virginia Woolf passed through different stages of the evolution of their stream of consciousness technique. Both succeeded in bringing the reader closer to what should be called 'life'. Virginia Woolf adopted Joyce's method, refining upon it and adopting it so that it would illuminate those aspects of experience which seemed to her significant, and state the problems which were her special concern, the problem of the individuality and the problem of its relation to time and death.

Virginia Woolf's first two novels *The Voyage Out* and *Night and Day* are conventional. The narrative proceeds in a traditional progression and there is no attempt to go very far into the minds of the characters. In *The Voyage Out*, plot is quiet, with no complications and no movements of high tension. There is a quiet impressionism in the telling of the story which deals with the development of
Rachel Vinrace from the time when she sails on the voyage out with other characters up to her peaceful death in the hospital at Santa Marina just after she has acquired the ability to take a grip on life. Night and Day proved to Virginia Woolf that one cannot distil refined essences of time and personality while employing traditional technique of the novel. And it was by this time that she had read Joyce and cast aside the traditional manner of writing novel. Virginia Woolf experimented ceaselessly in new forms and techniques in her desire to get near to an intense realization and an adequate and comprehensive expression of life. A study of her diary enables one to look into the ideas and thoughts that passed through her mind as she went on experimenting.

1925 Tuesday, April 8th.

I wonder if this time I have achieved something? Well, nothing anyhow compared with Proust, in whom I am embedded now. The thing about Proust is his combination of the utmost sensibility with the utmost tenacity. He searches out these butterfly shades to the last grain. He is as tough as catgut and as evanescent as a butterfly's bloom. And he will, I suppose, both influence me and make me out of temper with every sentence of my own.... More and more do I repeat my own version of Montaigne - 'It's life that matter'. 2

Monday, April 27th.

But my present reflection is that people have any number of states of consciousness; and I should like to investigate the party consciousness, the frock consciousness etc. 3

These entries follow closely the completion of Mrs Dalloway in 1925. Virginia Woolf was out to show the evanescent human consciousness.

1934 Tuesday, April 17th.

An idea about Shakespeare. That the play demands coming to the surface—hence insists upon a reality which the novel need not have, but perhaps should have contact with the surface, coming to the top. This is working out my theory of the different levels in writing and how to combine them: for I begin to think the combination necessary .... How many levels attempted, whether kept to or not. 4

Here James Joyce's theory of epiphany seems to have a direct bearing on this observation of Virginia Woolf. Joyce was also very much concerned with different levels of writing, namely lyrical, epical and dramatic. But Virginia Woolf went a step further and carried forward her investigation into the possibilities of communicating the entire 'reality'. She gave action which meant characters telling a character. She gave movement which again meant change of feeling. And above all she gave

3 Ibid., p. 75.
contrast, that is an intense rendering simultaneously of the different layers of human sensibility. In Jacob's Room, Virginia Woolf makes her first attempt to remove the narrator from the scene, so that the reader may seem to see the subject solely through the eyes of the people in the book. But elimination is not yet completely effected. There are passages of description; events are recorded, comments are made not by the characters themselves but by the author. "Elizabeth Flanders, of whom this and much more than this had been said and would be said, was of course, a widow in her prime. She was half way between forty and fifty." 5 Later such necessary facts will be given through the reflection of some other mind in the book, not from without, for example, Mrs Dalloway's appearance. "A charming woman, Scoope Purvis thought her (knowing her as one does know people who live next door to one in Westminster); a touch of the bird about her, of the jay, blue-green, light, vivacious, though she was over fifty, and grown very white since her illness. There she perched, never seeing him, waiting to cross, very upright." 5

In Jacob's Room, Virginia Woolf had yet to learn how to communicate all the facts that need to be known, how

5 Virginia Woolf, Jacob's Room, p. 13.
6 Virginia Woolf, Mrs Dalloway, p. 6.
to mark the passage of time and how to indicate the point of view without speaking in her own person. In this first experiment she is avowedly conscious of her difficulties.

The subject of *Mrs Dalloway*, so far as the principal theme is concerned is one personality, affecting and affected by the others who come into contact with it. The impression made upon the reader by the central personality is clear and full. The whole action takes place within one day. Within this narrow frame by means of the contact she makes and the memories they evoke in her and in others, her life story from girlhood to her present age of fifty is gradually unfolded. Virginia Woolf learned from Joyce how to give meaning to the simultaneity of experience. London is to *Mrs Dalloway* what Dublin is to Leopold Bloom, but her London is a large canvas background with light cleverly playing over it. Clarissa Dalloway's day in London, also is a day in June as in *Ulysses*.

*To The Lighthouse* tells about the Ramsay family relations to one another and to a small representative group of their friends. The visit to the lighthouse projected and then frustrated by the weather in the beginning and is effected at the end, is an instrument to reveal certain aspects of character such as *Mrs Ramsay's*
sympathetic understanding of other people's feeling, in particular those of her son James, Mr Ramsay's insensibility and his ruthless employment of logic and a sense of fact. The group of people assembled at the Ramsay's house, their children and friends are all revealed in the light of their relation to Mrs Ramsay and to one another, both before and after her death. And Lily Briscoe's endeavour to paint a picture of Mrs Ramsay, sitting on the steps of the house, and her subsequent completion of the picture is an expression of her sense of Mrs Ramsay's power to create order and harmony out of human relations.

To The Lighthouse is a poetic symbol with an uncircumscribed power of suggestion. For the reader as for Mrs Ramsay, the alternating light and shadow of the lighthouse beam symbolizes the rhythm of joy and sorrow in human life and the alternating radiance and darkness of even the most intimate human relationships.

The power of communicating with profound insight is an essential nature of Virginia Woolf's creative gift and it is developed to its fullest extent in The Waves. The six characters, from the nursery to old age, express themselves in subtle and imaginative idiom. The interest is focussed upon their inward experience. The Waves is the fullest expression of the subjective aspect of Virginia Woolf's creative genius. In it the attention is wholly concentrated
upon six people, and human experience is revealed from within their minds. The reader lives solely within the minds of these six characters seeing the world through their eyes, from youth to age, there is no moment at which the writer can deduce or conclude or by any means announce her own opinion. She has necessarily chosen six personalities in whose vision of the world she participates.

In the beginning Virginia Woolf was still uncertain of the possibility of the new technique, and *Jacob's Room* represents her great departure from the traditional writing. It leads on to her genius in its fulness to *Mrs Dalloway*, *To The Lighthouse* and *The Waves*. These successful works are all suffused with poetry. And in *The Waves* she showed perfect maturity in her stream of consciousness technique. Its pattern is supreme. As E.M. Forster remarks, *The Waves* is an extraordinary achievement and an immense extension of the possibilities of *Jacob's Room*. Thus Virginia Woolf's use of stream of consciousness underwent a gradual evolution till its perfection was achieved in *The Waves*.

To write *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Joyce plunged back into his own past. Its subject is the development of a young man from creature to creator. The young man develops casting off the shackles of
patriotism, religion and language. Joyce thought of a man's character as developing from an embryo with constant traits. The sense of the soul's development as like that of an embryo not only helped Joyce to work and rework the original elements in the process of gestation. Stephen's growth proceeds in waves in accretions of flesh, in particularization of needs and desires. In *The Portrait* other human beings are not allowed much except as influences upon the soul's development. The same figures appear and reappear, the schoolboy Héron for example, each time in an altered way to suggest growth in the soul's view of them. Towards the end, the soul is ready, it throws off its sense of imprisonment, its melancholy, its no longer tolerable conditions of lower existence, to be borne.

*The Portrait* is a kind of lyrical biography, with the structure determined as much by the caprices of the developing sensibility of the artist as by the growth of Stephen Dedalus from infancy to young manhood. The first chapter reads like an extended interior monologue, through the indirect presentation of the third person. One can determine Stephen's age, at a given moment, by the construction of the sentences and by the maturity of the language.

Young Stephen Dedalus believed that it was for the man of letters to record the epiphanies with extreme care
seeing that they themselves are the most delicate and 'evanescent' of moments. Joyce carefully defines the aesthetic experience implicit in his concept of the artist's epiphany: integritas, consonantia and claritas. In other words they are: isolation of the given image from its surroundings, perception of the formal harmony in it, and the emotional content of the experience.

The frequent stylistic changes in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, from the impressionism of infancy through the agonizing of adolescence to the austere dialectic of young manhood and then back again, prepare for the varying internal rhythm of the episodes of Ulysses. Ulysses represents the second stage of that process by which the personality of the artist refines itself out of existence. The method of A Portrait was to present Stephen through a series of fleeting glimpses at several stages of his life, from infancy to young manhood. In Ulysses, Joyce immobilizes him very strictly in time and allows the caprices of his imagination to determine the changes in his personality. In the Portrait all that one comes to know is mainly through the stream of consciousness of one character, that is the hero - Stephen Dedalus. In Ulysses there are three main characters whom we come to know through the stream of consciousness of each of them, in their own different ways.
Ulysses takes place in full light and is a complete and meticulous monograph, a total and shadowless study of the microcosm which any given individual is, of the human machine seen through a small bourgeois named Leopold Bloom, and of the entire truth about this character. 7

It is the inner man, laying out his entrails, immoderately and candidly displaying his thoughts, sketches or larvac of ideas, his bowels, his digestion and psychology. The narration starts early in the day and ends in the small hours of the morrow. "Ulysses is a work 'standing', Finnegans Wake a work 'reclining'." 8 The later takes place in one night, from the last hours of summer twilight to the first hours of dawn. It is an immense sleep, a Nocturne, a plunge into the night world.

Already in Ulysses, James Joyce had made an attempt to represent the thinking matter, the interrupted murmur or silent rumbling which hums within the pulsating blood of the body as the sea in the depths of a seashell. He created the interior monologue by reproducing the obscure, organic, visceral language which jogs along unceasingly within man. There was thus a complete break with classical habits of speech - nothing subsisted except an initial, 

8 Ibid.
internal and spontaneous movement. In it rhythm replaced order causing all intellectual elements to vanish. This technique was new, free from the chains of logic and even from the rules of syntax. It represented thought grasped in its nascent, elementary state and close to pure sensation.

Finnegans Wake is a step further. In it Joyce has put the language to sleep. Joyce has enclosed in the same volume the entire life of mankind and the sea of history. The work of James Joyce is remarkably unified. There is a continuity in the development of a poetic pattern. It is said that Joyce has written but a single book and that each of his books - Dubliners, The Portrait, Ulysses and Finnegans Wake are different stages of the same text. In this frame he encloses a sum of intentions and resources ever greater and greater until in Finnegans Wake he includes all the memory and consciousness of human race, all histories, all the world and a representation of human life. As Harry Levin has pointed out, the hero of The Portrait is the author himself, the hero of Ulysses is the common man, and that of Finnegans Wake is mankind. The past which Joyce tries to recapture is not only personal reminiscence but also collective experience. The burial mound of his sleeping giant contains an enormous and heterogeneous time capsule.
H.C. Earwicker's subconscious mind is the historical consciousness of the human race.

James Joyce and Virginia Woolf as experimental novelists of this century were confronting the same technical problem. 'Life escapes', Virginia Woolf complained in her critical assault on Wells and Bennett. It was the new complexity of vision which demanded a new form of expression. The reaction of novelists to this new recession of man has been varied. Joyce believed that a realistic minute-to-minute account of an individual's conscious (in Ulysses) or unconscious (in Finnegans Wake) thoughts could be combined with certain stavistic patterns of human behaviour to disclose the total nature of Man.

Joyce's experiment transcended by far the first stages of the novel's subjectivity. Proust and Dorothy Richardson had confined themselves to a single consciousness. He not only carried his principal character forward from one volume to the next but also began to spin two other consciousnesses parallel to that of the young Stephen Dedalus. In addition, Joyce has given us brief glimpses into the minds of a host of other Dublin characters: Father Connell of Clongowes who had befriended Dedalus years before; Miss Dunne, the typist, who is carrying on a correspondence with Bloom although they have never met; Master Patric Aloysius Dignam, whose father had been buried that morning.
They are seen largely through the mind’s eye view of Stephen Dedalus or Leopold Bloom. Joyce presents the panorama of Dublin and fills it with multiple incidents, people, minds; the reader becomes the collective eye of all the characters.

Like Joyce, Virginia Woolf clearly expressed her aesthetic of fiction. She tried to catch the shower of innumerable atoms, the vision of life, the iridescence, the luminous halo. Virginia Woolf’s Mrs Dalloway seems to be modelled on the structure of Ulysses. We are in many minds in the streets of London. Clarissa Dalloway’s mind and that of Septimus Warren Smith hold the centre of the book as did those of Bloom and Dedalus in Ulysses. The entire inwardness of the book, its limited time-scheme, the use of multiple views, so that the reader feels he has seen London through many eyes and so is aware of it through many awareness.

Like James Joyce, Virginia Woolf also has her own theory of fiction and there are close similarities between their views. Both are highly original and penetrating theorists of the ‘stream of consciousness’ novels, both consider the ‘inner life’, the life of the mind or ‘psyche’ to be the proper subject of a novelist. Both are at one
in their preoccupation with time. The nature of Virginia Woolf's characters alone made the use of the full stream of consciousness impossible. Her characters are highly articulate and quite abnormally self-aware, watching their thoughts and feelings the whole time as Leopold and Marion Bloom never do. Joyce's way of rendering their inner lives differs with each. Bloom, Marion and Dedalus think, feel, and speak in utterly different ways. The characters in Virginia Woolf's novels tend to think and experience the moment as Virginia Woolf herself does. They share her sensibility and mode of apprehension. Her characters—all speak the same language, that is the language of Virginia Woolf herself. Joyce on the other hand prefers a separate style for each of them.

James Joyce and Virginia Woolf use symbols, interior monologue and soliloquy as a means of conveying the stream of consciousness. In *The Waves* the reader is kept on the stretch, from the beginning to the end, as the six characters beat successively like waves upon the shore of our consciousness. These soliloquies sometimes overlap as waves do, or withdraw into an undercurrent, as each persona both speaks and comments in relation to his predecessor. In *The Waves*, one aspect of Virginia Woolf's vision of life is more completely given than in any other
of her books. By narrowing the readers attention and concentrating it upon the inner monologue of six persons, she is able to reveal, with profound insight, the experience of living. What is presented is the solitary consciousness, the reception of experience rather than its issue in action. The six combine to reveal the basic structure of human personality with its capacity for joy and pain; its earth-rootedness and its fear of life. It also reveals its bondage to self and its outreaching to others, its fragmentary perceptions and its nostalgia for perfect beauty and truth. The reader finds himself washed in the experiences not only of these six characters, but of all human consciousness and experience in depth and intimacy.

No work of art has rivalled *The Waves* in probing the human consciousness of six people, representing one generation, as this novel. James Joyce really confines himself to one or two characters at most. Each of the six characters share, in some measure, the total viewpoint of what Virginia Woolf would like to communicate.

James Joyce employs direct interior monologue in presenting the stream of consciousness of his characters. There is no author-interference in this technique of the direct interior monologue. Whereas Virginia Woolf uses mostly indirect interior monologue or the combination of
the both. She is present as an on-the-scene guide for the reader.

Joyce and Virginia Woolf are two major novelists in the new literary movement that has come to be known as 'modernism'. From differing backgrounds and for differing reasons and with differing effects both register a sense of isolation from a dominant culture. A close study of their novels show that both have differences and yet share a sense of oneness. Both are of different talents and temperaments, at the same time have turned fiction away from external to internal reality. There are striking similarities behind their differences. They seem to write from an acute need to cope with inner problems and project their inner life before the world. Joyce and Virginia Woolf in their own different manner served the same purpose. They created a fiction centred on the core of human experience.