

**TREATMENT OF TIME IN THE STREAM
OF CONSCIOUSNESS NOVELS
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
VIRGINIA WOOLF**

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*Thesis submitted to the University
of Calicut in partial fulfilment of
the requirements of the qualifying
examination for the degree of*

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DECLARATION

I, K Yaseen Ashraf, hereby declare that the study entitled "Treatment of Time in the Stream of Consciousness Novels with Special Reference to Virginia Woolf", submitted to the University of Calicut in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the qualifying examination for the Degree Of Doctor Of Philosophy In English, is an original record of observations and bona fide research work carried out by me during 1997-2005 under the guidance of Dr George V Andrews and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree or diploma.



K YASEEN ASHRAF

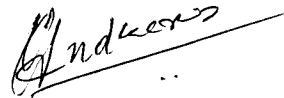
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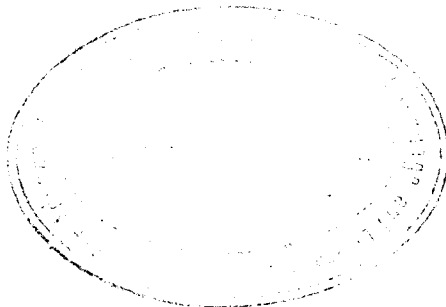
CERTIFICATE

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DR GEORGE V ANDREWS

July 2006.



PREFATORY NOTE

Writers of serious fiction have always responded to the dominant philosophical dilemmas of their times. They have addressed issues like man's free will and destiny, his relation to Fate, to Nature and to time. The stream of consciousness writers of the twentieth century articulated their view of the human condition through the form and the substance of their works. The temporal nature of experience has obsessed the thinking of some of the modern writers in their search for reality. Such obsession has had a background in philosophical formulations. While philosophers and thinkers had tried to redefine life, time and reality, writers too sought to focus on what is found to be real.

Since the beginning of literary discourses, serious writers have tried to comment on and define man's position in relation to others, and in relation to existence. A writer's "metaphysics", or philosophical frame, is not something that stands insulated from the external world and time. It is related to the general philosophical atmosphere of his time—it either actively shapes it or passively evolves out of it. Thus, the general temperament of serious writings

of any age is informed by and reflects the philosophical attitudes prevalent then.

The nineteenth century European novel was felt to misrepresent the fluid nature of consciousness and its experience of time. Novelists were therefore compelled to search for new techniques. Experimentation with form is thus related to an understanding of what constitutes reality. Along with the philosophical investigation into the nature of time and of reality, there have also been attempts to attune narrative techniques to these new perceptions—attempts that made an impact on the themes and techniques employed by fiction writers.

Stream of consciousness writing aims to provide a textual equivalent; the term “stream of consciousness” helps to identify in a rather general way what it was that writers were aiming to achieve in their fiction. In stream of consciousness fiction the focus shifts from motive and action (external man) to psychic existence and experience (internal man): from what the character does to what he is. Virginia Woolf believed that the search for reality is not a matter of dramatic action; it is a psychic activity. The fleeting but vital visions of the human consciousness have to be expressed within the setting of that consciousness.

Virginia Woolf, then, conceives time basically in two aspects: clock-time which is artificial, quantitative and spatial, and psychic time which is fluid, qualitative and concentric. Thus certain moments get invested in the consciousness with an importance and significance far greater than the significance pre-apportioned to it in clock-time. Virginia Woolf's novels proceed from such a premise.

Virginia Woolf sought an enduring absolute first in the time-defying consciousness which perceives unity, and then in the perceived objects like the lighthouse. She found that neither can do without the other, being but one part of the organic whole which alone can be absolute. Thus, she affirmed art as the agent of lasting unity. Art does this by transfixing the moment of vision which derives its integrating power from the actual, linear aspect of time and its sustaining power from its intuitive, psychic mode.

Time is both a challenge and an inspiration for stream of consciousness writers in general and Virginia Woolf in particular. They seek to answer the questions posed by time both in terms of theme and technique. Virginia Woolf brings these into an integrated vision and proposes the ability of art to stand as an enduring and unifying answer.

This study was inspired by discussions with the late Prof C A Sheppard. I am extremely grateful to Prof (Dr) George V Andrews for his forbearance and insistence on completing a work which should have been over in a fifth of the time. I also thank the principals of Farook College, particularly Dr P M Mubarak Pasha, who have been a constant encouragement and inspiration.

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INTRODUCTION

THE CONQUERING CHAMPION

WHO NEED NOT FIGHT

The field only reveals to man his own folly and despair, and victory is an illusion.

—William Faulkner, The Sound and the Fury (93)

Time has been an issue, major or minor, direct or indirect, in literature, more so since the twentieth century. As A A Mendilow puts it, “Like Sterne, the writer of today is preoccupied with the problem of time in fiction” (Mendilow 92). The sense of its dominating presence has not only resulted in contributions to physics and to philosophy, but has provoked some of our best writers to think in terms of (a) its relation to our existence, and (b) its role in communicating the realities of our existence. Thus, first, time has been treated as a central theme; secondly, an awareness of its limitations has necessitated a reconsideration of the approach on the part of writers to the manner and techniques of creative writing.

The twentieth century saw both an attempt at redefinition of reality and an attempt at coping with this new reality by using innovative techniques in narration and presentation. One point where these two attempts seem to have converged is the stream of consciousness fiction. It uses various techniques and is related to developments like the psychological novel prior to Virginia Woolf's and James Joyce's time. Along with these shifts in emphasis came the obsession with Time as both theme and technique—both content and form. Jean-Paul Sartre offered an interesting criticism of William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury in terms of his (Faulkner's) metaphysical theory of time. He states that the technique of the fiction writer always relates back to his metaphysics (Sartre, "On The Sound and the Fury" 79). In writer after writer, from Richardson to Faulkner to Joyce to Woolf, we find this preoccupation with character, not in terms of its external actions but in terms of its inner being.

This shift in emphasis to the inner lives of characters during the late Victorian period and in the modern period is rightly presumed to bear relation to a growing shift away from a belief in an independent, absolutely verifiable external reality. The breakdown of faith in religion after Darwin and in certain forms of scientific certainty after Heisenberg, Einstein, and others also paralleled these gradual shifts of

emphasis in the arts. A loss of confidence in absolutes, in political authority, scientific authority, religious authority, or indeed (with the rise of psychology during the 1920s) even in the authority of a unified subject or identity all took place in conformity with the shifting practices and innovations in artistic and literary form.

Through the centuries, masterpieces of western literature have recorded varying concepts of man, and of his ultimate destiny. In this sense, literature or any art can be broadly seen as man's search for perfection in the face of imperfections—for immortality in the face of death, and for what may be called an absolute principle against relative values. In accordance with the changes in the prevailing philosophical atmosphere and its representative theoretical reference-frame, the creative artists' visions also undergo changes.

A literary movement expresses, explicitly or implicitly, (i) its own concept of man, (ii) its interpretation of his limitations, and (iii) its version of the greatest impediments to man's perfection and self-fulfilment. These involve the writers' understanding of the real and the significant about human life. In its function of interpreting man's relation to nature, the universe and existence, a piece of creative writing resembles, in varying degrees, a myth. The differences between

a myth and a poetic vision are not slight. While the former is rooted in folk culture and religious tradition and has a wider appeal, the latter is quite often a private vision originating in the poet's individual convictions expressed through "private" imagery. A myth is the poem of a race, and, correspondingly, a poem (or any literary piece) is the myth of an individual.

The ancient Greeks and Romans identified in Fate the greatest limitation to man's self-fulfilment; their works focus on attempts to tame or appease the gods. The plays of the classical masters focus on the conflict between man and fate. To the Renaissance writers, with the progress in scientific reasoning, the external challenge is no more as inscrutable as a blind Fate; to them Nature was the prime enemy. Shakespeare, for one, dealt essentially with the question of nature—human nature and external nature. Man was no more a slave to some mysterious Fate, but to the perceptible Nature: to the elements, and to his own physical and psychic dispositions. But in the twentieth century, at least in some types of writings like the stream of consciousness novels and absurd plays, the perception of the challenge has undergone another radical shift. Man is no more a puppet in the hands of sporting gods, nor a typical individual straining to control nature—external or

his own. He is now seen as struggling, not just for survival (as in classical days), nor yet for perfection (as in, say, the Elizabethan Age), but for identity, for realising and fulfilling his self. His present challenge is not the inscrutable Fate or the uncontrollable Nature, but still arbitrary—it is Time. Man is a victim of Time, trying to master it. Serving as background to this shift are the contributions of philosophers, psychologists, and “experimental” novelists. “Time, conceived under the form of an unbounded and homogeneous medium, is nothing but the ghost of space, haunting the reflective consciousness.” (Bergson, Time and Free Will 98) In Search of Lost Time is a semi-autobiographical novel in seven volumes written by the French writer and thinker Marcel Proust. This, his most prominent work (first part published in 1912), is popularly known for its length and the author’s notion of involuntary memory. Its title was rendered in English as Remembrance of Things Past. This work can be seen as a statement of the importance of time as a central concern in creative writing as well as in philosophy. Time is often equated with irredeemable loss, with dissolution into the past. Only what can be remembered, William Faulkner reminds us, can be lost. In his The Sound and the Fury, the character Quentin, reflecting on his watch and the time when his father gave it to him, puts out the challenge: “I give

it to you not that you may remember time, but that you might forget it now and then for a moment and not spend all your breath trying to conquer it” (93). Time is the conquering champion that needs not even fight: “Because no battle is ever won he said. They are not even fought. The field only reveals to man his own folly and despair, and victory is an illusion” (93). Indeed, this novel takes its title from a passage in Shakespeare’s Macbeth which redounds with the outrage of the human spirit that has been denied its own tragedy by the inexorable march of time:

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time
...It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing. (Shakespeare124)

Normally the narrative is the story reconstructed in the chronological order. Text, on the other hand, is a spoken or written discourse which is the vehicle of the story. In simple terms, text is what we read, and story is what we construe out of it. While events do not necessarily appear in their chronological order in the text, the story is abstracted from the text sequentially. Thus we have the elements of the

story, the text, and the sequence, all making up a fictional narrative. They correspond to the form, the substance, and the rhythm order. Form emerges out of the plot, substance out of its presentation, and rhythm out of the manipulation of time. While conventional novels lean heavily on the plot/ story part, “experimental” novels (Sterne’s Tristram Shandy and Joyce’s Finnegans Wake, for instance) are too much biased towards the substance/ presentation aspect. Stream of consciousness writings try to bring about a balance between the two extremes. They do not emphasise the plot, nor do they strain their communicability with too much weight put on the manner of presentation. In bringing about this balance, they make use of time both as formal principle and as vehicle of meaning. Time is used as a device that renders a meaningful framework for the plot, and as a medium that gives significance to the presentation. In this two-fold manipulation of time for narrative purposes, some major novels of Virginia Woolf provide case studies.

Time has been a motif, a deliberate topic, not merely in stream of consciousness fiction but in many other “serious” types of fiction as well, but particularly so in the stream of consciousness fiction. The stream of consciousness mode takes up many experimental strands in earlier writings, particularly those that deliberately “played” with

time—contracting it and expanding it. Lawrence Sterne's Tristram Shandy exemplified this temporal manipulation. In stream of consciousness fiction, time ("external" or clock time) is seen as an ordering, streamlining principle that gives life a false tidiness and order. The stream of consciousness fiction rebels against such fictitious tidiness. Indeed, this type of fiction tries to demolish all sense of order and tidiness, of sequence and logic, in everything concerned with human life. The attempt in the stream of consciousness fiction is to render the thoughts "as they fall" upon the mind (Woolf, "Modern Fiction" 106). These thoughts as they fall, in random, free, unstructured, chaotic, and even inchoate or nonverbal form—these are the purest fragments or moments of sensation and being. The novelist using stream of consciousness seeks to create the impression that we are overhearing the flood of sensations and uncensored, pre-rational thoughts within a character's mind before the character has ordered them into any coherent form or shape. Thus the novelist will dispense with grammar, with logic, with neat, orderly sentences and predictable pauses. Joyce lets Molly Bloom run on for one extended sentence of sixty-four pages in Ulysses. Woolf refers to this aspect of stream of consciousness when she talks to the reader in "Character and Fiction", later printed as "Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown", and says: "In the course of your daily life this past week you have had far stranger and more

interesting experiences than the one I have tried to describe. You have overheard scraps of talk that filled you with amazement. You have gone to bed at night bewildered by the complexity of your feelings. In one day thousands of ideas have coursed through your brains; thousands of emotions have met, collided, and disappeared in astonishing disorder” (Woolf, Collected Essays I 336). The novelist of course shapes this collection of thoughts into the appearance of shapelessness. Woolf in her novels tries to suggest this flood of the daily internal experiences of any ordinary person, an experience wherein “thousands of ideas have coursed through your brains; thousands of emotions have met, collided, and disappeared in astonishing disorder”. Stream of consciousness is the rendition of the astonishing disorder of our minds.

Experimentation with form is thus related to an understanding of what constitutes reality. It has left its greatest imprint mainly in stream of consciousness writings. Less than a century ago, Virginia Woolf and James Joyce unravelled the wonders of human consciousness in waves of verbal streams that seemed to capture the then current understanding of the reality of character and self. The discoveries of William James (who coined the expression “stream of consciousness”), the theories of Sigmund Freud (who plumbed the truth of the subconscious) and the narrative explorations of consciousness by Henry James contributed to

this adventurism in form. The experimental approach to narrative and plot reshaped the twentieth-century novel. Their influence remained unchallenged as the concept of consciousness and the mind were determined largely by the theories of Freud and Karl Jung.

Robert Scholes and Robert Kellog (The Nature of Narrative) propose that there are two main, antithetical modes of narrative: the empirical, whose primary allegiance is to the real, and the fictional, whose primary allegiance is to the ideal. By fictional narrative they mean what is usually called imaginative writing. They also argue that the novel is a synthesis of pre-existing narrative modes, including empirical narratives like history. We even have “non-fiction novels” like Truman Capote’s In Cold Blood which is an account of a brutal murder committed in Kansas in 1959. such novels are more like docu-fiction than fiction proper. It would then seem that literary realism is closer to history and other narratives while attempts like the stream of consciousness belong to the other end of the spectrum. In other words, stream of consciousness writings stand apart from conventional narrative styles in that they are based on a new perspective about life and reality. This is exactly what Virginia Woolf and others suggested some eighty years ago.

The earliest precedent of any literary work using this technique is possibly Ovid's Metamorphoses in ancient Rome. With its rapid, unconnected association of objects, geometrical shapes and numerology, Sir Thomas Browne's discourse The Garden of Cyrus (1658) is also widely considered one of the very earliest examples of stream-of-consciousness writing. Another would be The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman by Laurence Sterne, (1760). Further examples of the development of this style are The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket by Edgar Allan Poe (1837/1838) and Les Lauriers sont coupés by Édouard Dujardin (1888). Tolstoy used something similar to the stream-of-consciousness technique in Anna Karenina (1877) in the portions leading to the climax; another early example is Arthur Schnitzler's 1900 short story "Lieutenant Gustl". Stream of consciousness writing gained rapid prominence in the twentieth century. Some of the works of Gyula Krudy (The Adventures of Sindbad) also employ a technique that can in many respects be considered the fore-runner of stream-of-consciousness.

Noted writers to employ this technique in the English language include Virginia Woolf, James Joyce and William Faulkner. The more famous works to employ the technique partially or substantially include Fyodor Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment, Marcel Proust's In Search

of Lost Time, Dorothy Richardson's Pilgrimage (1915-28), James Joyce's Ulysses (in particular Molly Bloom's soliloquy), Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway, To the Lighthouse and The Waves, William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury and As I Lay Dying, Jack Kerouac's On the Road, J. D. Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye, Robert Anton Wilson's & Robert Shea's Illuminatus, Samuel R. Delany's Dhalgren, F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby", Hubert Selby Jr.'s "Last Exit to Brooklyn", T.S. Elliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", Irvine Welsh's "Trainspotting", Hunter S. Thompson's "Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas". However, there are some writers of the twentieth century who are identified with stream of consciousness novels, and they are also writers who tried to seriously consider the issue of time in relation to human existence, perception and understanding.

The present study attempts to put in this perspective the treatment of time in the twentieth century stream of consciousness novels. While philosophers and thinkers had tried to redefine life, time and reality, writers too have sought to focus on what is perceived to be real. Since the beginning of literary discourses, serious writers have tried to comment on and define man's position in relation to others, and in relation to existence. In defining this man-society and man-universe

relationships, they make use of some framework for the general structure of the work. Chapter One seeks to outline the philosophical preoccupations that form the basis for creative writings including serious stream of consciousness novels.

This is necessary because a writer's "metaphysics", or philosophical frame, is not something that stands insulated from the external world and age, especially when we are talking about stream of consciousness. It is related to the general philosophical atmosphere of his time—it either actively shapes it or passively evolves out of it. Thus, the general temperament of serious writings of any age is informed by and reflects the philosophical attitudes prevalent then. The nineteenth century European novel was felt to misrepresent the fluid nature of consciousness and its experience of time. Novelists were therefore compelled to search for new techniques. Experimentation with form thus becomes integral to representation of reality as it is understood. Along with the philosophical investigation into the nature of time and of reality, there have also been attempts to attune narrative techniques to these new perceptions—attempts that made an impact on the themes and techniques employed by fiction writers. Chapter Two tries to investigate these in respect of stream of consciousness writers.

In stream of consciousness fiction the focus shifts from motive and action (external man) to psychic existence and experience (internal man): from what the character does to what he is. Virginia Woolf, one major writer who set out to define reality in her own way and to adapt narrative forms to it, believed that the search for reality is not a matter of dramatic action; it is a psychic activity. The fleeting but vital visions of the human consciousness have to be expressed within the setting of that consciousness. In Woolf's best fiction, plot is generated by the inner lives of the characters. Psychological effects are achieved through the use of imagery, symbol, and metaphor. Character unfolds by means of the ebb and flow of personal impressions, feelings, and thoughts. Thus, the inner lives of human beings and the ordinary events in their lives are made to seem extraordinary. Woolf's fiction was drawn largely from her own experience, and her characters are almost all members of her own affluent, intellectual, upper-middle class. But she takes them into the rarefied atmosphere of stream of consciousness.

Virginia Woolf, thus, conceives time basically in two aspects: clock-time which is artificial, quantitative and spatial, and psychic time which is fluid, qualitative and concentric. Thus certain moments get invested in the consciousness with an importance and significance far greater than the significance pre-apportioned to it in clock-time.

Virginia Woolf's novels proceed from such a premise. Chapter Three takes a look at her novels from the temporal angle, and argues that these novels are a progressive effort on the novelist's part to overcome the limitations imposed by time, and, ultimately, to reach a compromise that is both honest (true to reality) and pragmatic (true to actuality). As Northrop Frye puts it, "An author's narrative is his linear movement" (Lodge, Twentieth Century Literary Criticism 429). A narrative certainly involves a communication process, within the limits imposed by verbal language, and at the same time it is an attempt to transcend those limits so that out of the narrative emerges something essentially unlike the inert, dead, words. Narrative is sequential by necessity, and transcendent by its creative nature. In both these respects, the stream of consciousness form of narrative seeks to blaze a new trail. It seeks to break the limits of sequentiality, and at the same time tries to overcome the problems posed by such breakdown of sequential narrative. Central to these core concerns is its treatment of time, both as a structural device and as a thematic obsession.

One of the most gifted and innovative of the stream of consciousness novelists, Virginia Woolf in her very early fiction showed signs of moving from traditional narrative toward subjective exploration. Joyce's *Ulysses* provided her, very much as it did William

Faulkner, with the technical modes she needed and could apply in her own way. In Mrs Dalloway (1925) she showed a thorough grasp of Joyce's devices, imitating some of them but working for high condensation and glimpses of moments of experience rather than attempting the illusion of a total picture. The most striking difference between the two is Woolf's use of her own poetic medium to portray the inner world of each character rather than allowing their minds to express themselves in their particular idiom, as in Joyce. To the Lighthouse (1927), The Waves (1931), and the posthumous Between the Acts (1941) are Woolf's most original works, blending the subjective modes of Joyce with those of Proust.

While many of the leading stream of consciousness writers of the twentieth century exhibit this "time-sense" it is Virginia Woolf who typically addresses the dilemmas of the new narrative mode. She feels that when stream of consciousness tries to express the reality of consciousness (which for her is the reality of life itself), it loses out on actuality and communicability; it then becomes unintelligible. Whereas when the writer attempts to make it intelligible, it loses its truthfulness because it imposes an artificial order on the basic disorder of the consciousness-stream.

Virginia Woolf's primary concern as a novelist is the exploration of character. She sought an enduring absolute first in the time-defying consciousness which perceives unity, and then in the perceived objects like the lighthouse. She found that neither of these can do without the other, being but one part of the organic whole which alone can be absolute. Subjective experiences are real but incommunicable. Objective experiences are communicable but unreal. This to her is the true dilemma of the artist. She found a merger of both these in the "moment of vision", which is sustained by art. Thus, if we are to go by the entire corpus of her fictional output and her gradual evolution through them, she affirms art as the agent of lasting unity—art does this by transfixing the "moment of vision" which derives its integrating power from the actual, linear aspect of time and its sustaining power from its intuitive, psychic mode.

In Fowles's novel, the eponymous protagonist Daniel Martin has his moment of creative epiphany at Tsankawi, and here the novel's credentials as a vehicle of knowledge are underscored: the novel, through its ability to fictionalize and reimagine, affords a reinvigorating perspective on the real. "And, through its fluid yet cohesive treatment of time, the novel fashions a mode of temporal understanding that is unavailable in other forms of writing, and that

assists our comprehension of the individual's ongoing role in social history" (Head 2). This moment of vision seems to have been Virginia Woolf's greatest obsession in her novels, and her career seems to have veered towards an unambiguous celebration of its victory over the limitations of time—a victory that is possible only in art.

In the "stream of consciousness" mode of fictional presentation the author writes as though inside the minds of the characters. Since the ordinary person's mind jumps from one event to another, stream of consciousness tries to capture this phenomenon. Everything is presented through the apparently unorganised succession of images. This mode is radically different from the older one of presenting the narrative through logical sequence and argument. It reflects the twentieth-century research and interest in the psychology of "free association." Experience is a flux, and the novelist must communicate it. Yet there must be some sort of order by means of which it is presented. The novelist using stream of consciousness seeks to create the illusion that we are overhearing the flood of sensations and uncensored, pre-rational thoughts within a character's mind before the character has ordered them into any coherent form or shape. Thus the novelist will dispense with grammar, with logic, with neat, orderly sentences and predictable pauses. Virginia Woolf seems to have

anticipated, even if unknowingly, later neurobiological findings: “In neurobiological terms, [the mind] is a complex system of billions of neurons between which countless connections are being made simultaneously.... The atoms do not fall in a discrete chronological order—they bombard us from all directions, and are dealt with simultaneously by different parts of the brain.” (Lodge, Consciousness and the Novel: Connected Essays 62)

Erich Auerbach’s Mimesis (1946) examines “the representation of reality in Western literature” from Homer onwards. In the final chapter “The Blue Stocking” he selects Virginia Woolf’s To the Lighthouse to stand as the exemplary novel of the modernist period. Not only does he provide a fine, painstaking analysis of Woolf’s use of multipersonal narrative points of view and of her display of what he calls “omnitemporality” (the coexistence within experience of different time frames), he also argues that To the Lighthouse can be seen as a response to the specific character of modern life.

In technique as well as theme, time is both a challenge and an inspiration for stream of consciousness writers in general and Virginia Woolf in particular. Content and form are not independent of each other. To writers like Virginia Woolf, this type of content could have

but this kind of form, and no other. The answers to the question posed by time are sought to be answered by them both in terms of content and form. Virginia Woolf brings these into an integrated vision and proposes the ability of art to stand as an enduring and unifying answer.

Art, she seems to be suggesting, gets invested with a reality that has escaped conventional writers. This reality is a fusion of time's durability and its universality, manifested in "the moment". John Keats presented the enduring quality of art ("Ode on a Grecian Urn") as something that is quite private and beyond the power of words. Virginia Woolf (in her last novel Between the Acts) proposes how the artist can triumph over time through her vision.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND

*Our past still travels with us from afar
And what we have been makes us what we are.*

— George Eliot.

Since the beginning of literary discourses, serious writers have tried to comment on and define man's position in relation to others, and in relation to existence. In defining this man-society and man-universe relationships, they make use of some framework for the general structure of the work. Sartre points out how the "fictional technique" always relates back to the writer's "metaphysics". "The critics' task", he says, "is to define the latter before evaluating the former" (Sartre 83).

A writer's "metaphysics", or philosophical frame, is not something that stands insulated from the external world and age. It is related to the general philosophical atmosphere of his time—it either

actively shapes it or passively evolves out of it. Thus, the general temperament of serious writings of any age is informed by and reflects the philosophical attitudes prevalent then.

Time has been a concern with writers and philosophers alike. It has caught the attention of thinkers, both religious and secular. All the same, it has often defied definition. St Augustine introduces a question about the nature of time: “What, then, is time?” wonders Augustine. “I know well enough what it is, provided that nobody asks me; but if I am asked what it is and try to explain, I am baffled.” (Augustine Confessions Book 11 Chapter 14). Kant claimed time is the condition of the possibility of any experience whatsoever. In Kant’s terminology time is the “form of inner sense”. It might seem, on such a view, that perceptual experience would necessarily misrepresent the world. If time is not a part of the world, but is integral to the way we experience the world, our experiences must be false. But, according to Kant, in order for us to experience empirical objects they must be spatio-temporal. An analysis of temporality is in fact an analysis of the conditions under which truth – “the agreement of knowledge with its object” (Heidegger 258) – is possible for any ordinary person.

The temporal nature of experience has thus obsessed the thinking of some of the modern writers in their search for reality. In other words, while earlier thinkers theorised about time and got stuck with the question of reality, modern writers, on a more ordinary level, went on a quest of what is real in human experience and came up with their own view and treatment of time. Such obsession has had a background in philosophical formulations.

Locke and Hume, early eighteenth century English thinkers, understood the philosophical problem of perception of motion as a special case of a more general concern. This more general concern focuses on the origin of our ideas of time, especially our ideas of succession and duration. The empiricists assumed that we never have a direct impression or experience as of one event succeeding another, nor do we ever perceive directly any duration of time that elapses between the occurrence of two events or over the course of a single event. Thus, Locke writes definitively that we have no perception of duration (Locke 182), and Hume expands upon this idea. (Hume 231).

Locke and Hume think it is obvious that we have no intuitive faculty by means of which we experience the passage of time. For example, Locke argued that reflection on the succession of ideas in the

mind, especially during our experience of the motion of external objects, gives rise to the simple idea of duration; and from this in turn we derive all of the simple modes of time and temporal measurements. The idea of time itself is just that of a determinate length of this duration, measured across non-contemporaneous intervals by reference to the presumed regularity of periodic natural movements, such as the rotation and orbit of the earth in relation to the sun. Once established upon the basis of our experiences, these measurements of time can be applied beyond the limits of that experience, or even beyond the finite boundaries of the original motions themselves. Once we know how much time “a year” is, by observation of the seasonal changes produced during a single orbit of the earth, we can without difficulty consider the extent of time that occurred before the sun or earth existed.

There is, thus, a systematic analogy between spatial and temporal ideas: both are conceived in limited experiences, yet can be applied to infinite expansion or duration. Space and duration are continuous and undifferentiated, yet both permit the designation of place and time in relation to fixed points of reference. Finally, both space and time are infinitely divisible, even though their parts are inseparable. Together, they provide a framework for organizing our experience, within three-dimensional space and linear time. Our knowledge of the natural world

and its operations is reliable, adequate, and sufficient for our practical needs, yet it is strictly limited. Efforts to achieve a more systematic degree of certainty in this realm are not only bound to fail but also tend to require taking for granted abstract principles, which can only confirm us in error rather than lead us to truth.

Locke devoted careful attention to our use of the faculty of sensory perception, the passive ability to receive ideas from the external world by means of our sensory organs. The simple ideas acquired by attending to these mechanical operations are the first components of all human thought (Locke II ix 1-6). Although sensitive knowledge is strictly limited in its scope and reliability, Locke held that the testimony of sensory experience, lying as it does entirely outside our voluntary control, provides all the evidence we can have—and all the evidence we need—of the existence, nature, and operation of physical objects. (Locke IV xi 2-6)

The equation between time and space has influenced writers' perception of temporality. Time is spatial, some would argue, while others would suggest that the two are quite unlike, that in their mutual relationship they are, if at all, just complementary but not identical. Since the simple idea of space is derived from both visual and tactile

perception, it is conceived as the three-dimensional separation of distinct bodies. Its simple modes include both units of spatial measurement and the geometrical figures (Locke II xiii 2-6). Because space is conceived as continuous extension with inseparable and immoveable parts, Locke emphatically denied the Cartesian identification of space with body (II xiii 13-17). This has significant consequences, including the possibility of space without any body in it—the vacuum criticised by Cartesian natural philosophy. In Locke's view, since the ideas of space and body are distinct, the possibility of one existing without the other is evident, unless our opinions are driven by theoretical prejudice (Locke II xiii 21-26).

Time yields to a similar pattern of analysis. Reflection on the succession of ideas in the mind, especially during our experience of the motion of external objects, gives rise to the simple idea of duration, from which in turn we derive all of the simple modes of time and temporal measurements (Locke II xiv 1-8). The idea of time itself is just that of a determinate length of this duration, measured across non-contemporaneous intervals by reference to the presumed regularity of periodic natural movements, such as the rotation and orbit of the earth in relation to the sun (Locke II xiv 17-23). Once established upon the basis of our experiences, these measurements of time can be applied

beyond the limits of that experience, or even beyond the finite boundaries of the original motions themselves. Once we know how much time “a year” is, by observation of the seasonal changes produced during a single orbit of the earth, we can without difficulty consider the extent of time that occurred before the sun or earth existed (Locke II xiv 24-30).

There is, thus, a systematic analogy between spatial and temporal ideas for Locke: both are conceived in limited experiences, yet can be applied to infinite expansion or duration. Space and duration are continuous and undifferentiated, yet both permit the designation of place and time in relation to fixed points of reference. Finally, both space and time are infinitely divisible, even though their parts are inseparable. Together, they provide a framework for organizing our experience, within three-dimensional space and linear time (Locke II xv 1-12).

Again, space and time can be quantified. Beginning with the simple idea of unity, each of us repeats and compounds it mentally in order to conceive the simple modes of number, each of which is so clear and distinct as to ground demonstrable knowledge of mathematics (Locke II xvi 1-8). Locke also maintained that this process of

compounding is, in principle, unlimited, and our awareness that the process could be repeated indefinitely provides us with a clear idea of infinity (Locke II xvii 1-5). Although we naturally and correctly apply this idea to our conceptions of space and time, Locke noted that we have no positive notion from experience of either infinite duration or infinite extension. Knowing that there is no end of the counting process is different from having a positive idea of infinity (Locke II xvii 9-15).

What we experience within the spatio-temporal framework are physical objects—bodies. Unlike the Cartesians, Locke distinguished sharply between the ideas of space and body: both involve extension, but bodies have the additional feature of solidity. The simple idea of solidity, derived from our tactile experience of the physical world, is that of mutual impenetrability—where space is occupied by one body, another cannot occupy. The experience of changes in the relative place of distinct bodies with respect to each other through time gives rise to the idea of motion. This idea of motion is another primary idea of bodies. In practice, we commonly distinguish different bodies by moving them apart from each other spatially. But Locke emphasized that motion is only an activity of bodies, not truly a part of their essence (Locke II i 10).

Thus, the most basic features of body are extension, solidity, and mobility (Locke II xxiii 3-10). Locke believed that our knowledge of material substances is strictly limited by the bounds of our sensory capacities, although he also supposed that the experiential awareness of bodies that we are capable of is adequate for our practical needs in a material world (Locke II xxiii 11-16).

Although we are incapable of demonstrative knowledge of the substantial natures and causal powers that operate in the natural world, we can, in Locke's view, achieve probable knowledge based upon our sensory observations. The "corpuscularian hypothesis" offers a coherent account of observable sensible qualities (Locke IV iii 16). The insensible, minute particles of material substance are the real essences whose causal interactions, in ways unknown to us, produce all of the observable qualities and powers that come to be included in our abstract ideas of them, their nominal essences. Analogical reasoning from familiar macroscopic events enables us at least to imagine how unobservably small corpuscles might interact in ways that produce the sensible qualities and powers of bodies that are visible to us (Locke IV xvi 12).

Thus, our knowledge of the natural world and its operations is reliable, adequate, and sufficient for our practical needs. However, and this is the great philosophical problem, it is strictly limited. Efforts to achieve a more systematic degree of certainty in this realm are bound to fail (Locke IV xii 4-5). Here, as elsewhere in the development of the human understanding, Locke believed it vital to recognize and to respect our limitations.

The constancy of our observations of simple interactions among physical objects, for example, leads us to suppose that there must be some genuine degree of causal regularity in nature itself. The ideas of cause and effect derive from our observation that changes appear to occur as the result of other changes. What we identify as capable of producing such a change, we call the cause, and the change it produces, the effect. Within this general conceptual frame, Locke distinguished between the creation of something entirely new, the generation of a natural being from its own internal development, the making of an artificial being, and the alteration of things by substituting one quality for another (Locke II xxvi 1-2). In none of these instances, however, are we fully aware of the nature of the causal process itself.

Causality, logicity and order speak of steadiness and stability—the very things that many stream of consciousness writers failed to see in the external life of clock-time. On the other hand, the philosophical assurance of causal regularity derives solely from the observed recurrence of patterns in our sensory experience. Thus reassured, we use analogical reasoning to generate causal hypothesis about connections among things and events whose operations lie wholly beyond our experience (Locke IV xvi 6-7). So long as our knowledge of bodies is derived from the observable qualities of bodies, in ignorance of their internal features and operations, we can have no certain universal knowledge of the material world. Without doubting the genuine causal efficacy of particular substances, Locke believed it impossible for us to know of it. Observational regularity is the best we can do, and it must be adequate for our needs, even though we remain forever incapable of comprehending the true structure of reality (Locke IV vi 10-11).

As against this, there are also among philosophers the advocates of the concept of “Specious Present”. It was William James who introduced this doctrine. These claim that we do have a direct perception of duration, that we experience the world, in other words, in temporally extended units that are taken in as a whole. As William

James writes, in a famous passage from his noted work Principles of Psychology:

[T]he practically cognised present is no knife-edge, but a saddle-back, with a certain breadth of its own on which we sit perched, and from which we look in two directions into time. The unit of composition of our perception of time is a *duration*, with a bow and a stern, as it were – a rearward- and a forward-looking end... We do not first feel one end and then feel the other after it, and from the perception of the succession infer an interval of time between, but we seem to feel the interval of time as a whole, with its two ends embedded in it (609-10).

Later in the same chapter James defines the specious present clearly as “the short duration of which we are immediately and incessantly sensible” (631); he insists that within this short duration we can discern earlier and later parts (610).

This doctrine of the Specious Present proposes that we are at every moment in direct perceptual contact not only with what is now occurring but also with what has recently occurred and indeed with

what is about to occur as well. It might be interesting to investigate how far this concept corresponds to Virginia Woolf's idea of "the moment of vision" and James Joyce's idea of a secular epiphany in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. As William James says in Principles of Psychology, the experienced present is "a saddle-back...from which we look in two directions into time" (609). Time is one of the most basic characteristics of human experience. Though many people have cast doubts as to the validity of considering time as a constituent of the physical world, individuals and societies continue to experience time and to regulate their lives by it. Some of our notions of time are derived from natural processes like day and night, the solar year and so on.

Time is thus a public and social convention, but it is also a very personal experience that is not easily communicated. The arts may be seen as attempts to convert to the public domain things that are essentially in the private and personal domain. Spatiality and temporality are thus meeting points of the public and the personal levels of experience and consciousness. The temporally articulated understanding of being that characterises our existence, according to Heidegger, is the condition of the possibility of truth. Northrop Frye, in his formulation of the archetypal framework for criticism, has

attempted to analyse works of art in terms of their spatial and temporal dimensions. Music is an art that moves in time; its organising principle is rhythm which is temporal recurrence. Painting is presented in space; it is organized on pattern which is spatial recurrence. All arts may be conceived both temporally and spatially. Literature has its rhythm (which is narrative), and its pattern (the meaning or significance). “An author’s narrative is his linear movement; his meaning is the integrity of his completed form.” (Lodge, Twentieth Century Literary Criticism 429) Any unit of verbal structure seen as part of a total pattern or rhythm is an image. Rhythm (that is, narrative) is founded on a natural cycle. In human life, ritual is a voluntary effort to rejoin the natural cycle. It is a temporal sequence of meaningful acts; in it is the origin of narrative. Pattern (meaning) has its origin in an inspired moment of revelation, in oracle, in the epiphanic moment.

Barry Dainton, in his book Stream of Consciousness, defines the specious present in a similar manner. According to Dainton, “Whatever falls within [a subject’s] specious present is sensed all at once as a whole, but a temporally extended whole”(137-8). As with James, Dainton denies Locke and Hume’s claim that we have no perception of duration as such. Narrative fiction has to be sequential. It is “the narration of a succession of fictional events” (Rimmon-Kenan 2).

The stream of consciousness novel aroused much controversy since the publication of Dorothy Richardson's Pointed Roofs in 1915. Shiv K Kumar has attempted to present a comprehensive interpretation of its nature and scope in terms of Bergson's concept of durational flux, "which seems to provide an important clue to the real creative impulse behind the new mode of portraying character as a ceaseless stream of becoming" (Kumar, Bergson and the Stream of Consciousness Novel 5). In other words, the basic issues involved in this form of fiction are essentially of a metaphysical nature, as is suggested by the preoccupation of various protagonists in the novels of Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf and James Joyce with the ultimate nature of reality.

Of this new concept of experience as a process of qualitative interpenetration of states of consciousness, Bergson's philosophy seems to be the most comprehensive formulation. Dorothy Richardson corroborated this view in a letter to Shiv K Kumar (Kumar, Bergson and the Stream of Consciousness Novel 6). "No doubt", she wrote, "Bergson influenced many minds, if only by putting into words something then dawning within the human consciousness: an increased sense of the inadequacy of the clock as a time-measurer". Kumar finds a parallelism between the notion of the stream of consciousness as it

appears in these novelists and the Bergsonian concept of flux. It is possible that in Bergson's literary presentation of his philosophical theories, many a contemporary writer might have experienced a kind of self-realization.

Henri Louis Bergson (1859-1941), the French philosopher and psychologist, set the tone for a reconsideration of the experience of time in relation to human perception and life. His three large works, Time and Free Will, Matter and Memory, and Creative Evolution develop his vision of time and motion, of a mighty world which is always becoming, always changing, growing, striving. His work captured the imagination of the twentieth century intellect. It seemed to give meaning to some of our deepest instincts, our strangest and least explicable tendencies.

The reality of Change is, for Bergson, absolute, and on this, as a fundamental point, he constructs his thought. In conjunction with his study of Memory, it leads up to his discussions of Real Time (*la duree*), of Freedom, and of Creative Evolution. This idea of universal “becoming”—a vision of the reality of Change—is at the centre of Bergson’s philosophy. He holds that Change is substantial, that it constitutes the very stuff of life.

“There are changes, but there are not things that change; change does not need a support. There are movements, but there are not, necessarily, constant objects which are moved; movement does not imply something that is movable” (Matter and Memory 24).

“Apart from Change there is no reality. All is movement, and we ourselves are movement, which carries with it all things and all creatures, and that in this eternity—not of immutability but of life and Change— that we live and move and have our being” (Perception 37).

From the study of Change we are led on to a consideration of the problems connected with our perception of the external world, which has its roots in change. These problems have given rise to some very opposing views—the classic warfare between Realism and Idealism. Bergson is of neither school, but holds that they each rest on misconceptions, a wrong emphasis on certain facts. He invites us to follow him closely while he investigates the problems of Perception in his own way.

We will assume for the moment that we know nothing of theories of matter and theories of spirit, nothing of the discussions as to the reality or ideality of the external world. Here I am in the presence of images, in the vaguest sense of the word, images perceived when my senses are opened to them, unperceived when they are closed. ... Now of these images there is ONE which is distinct from all the others, in that I do not know it only from without by perceptions, but from within by affections; it is my body. (Bergson, Matter and Memory 1).

Reference to physiology shows in the structure of human bodies afferent nerves which transmit a disturbance to nerve centres, and also efferent nerves which conduct from other centres movement to the periphery, thus setting in motion the body in whole or in part. When we make enquiries from the physiologist or the psychologist with regard to the origin of these images and representations, we are sometimes told that, as the centrifugal movements of the nervous system can evoke movement of the body, so the centripetal movements—at least some of them--give rise to the representation, mental picture, or perception of the external world.

Yet we must remember that the brain, the nerves, and the disturbance of the nerves are, after all, only images among others. So it is absurd to state that one image, say the brain, begets the others, for “the brain is part of the material world, but the material world is not part of the brain. Eliminate the image which bears the name ‘material world,’ and you destroy, at the same time, the brain and the cerebral disturbances which are parts of it.”(Matter and Memory 4)

The data of perception are external images, then my body, and changes brought about by my body in the surrounding images. The external images transmit movement to my body, it gives back movement to them. My body or part of my body, i.e., my brain, could not beget a whole or part of my representation of the external world.

You may say that my body is matter or that it is an image—the word is of no importance. If it is matter, it is a part of the material world, and the material world consequently exists around it and without it. If it is an image--that image can give but what has been put into it, and since it is, by hypothesis, the image of my body only, it would be absurd to expect to get from it that of the whole universe. My body, an object

destined to move other objects, is then a centre of action; it cannot give birth to a representation (Matter and Memory 5).

The body, however, is privileged, since it appears to choose within certain limits certain reactions from possible ones. It exercises a real influence on other images, deciding which step to take among several which may be possible. It judges which course is advantageous or dangerous to itself, by the nature of the images which reach it. The brain centres are concerned with motor reaction rather than with conscious perception, “the brain is an instrument of action and not of representation” (Matter and Memory 83). Therefore, in the study of the problems of perception, the starting- point should be action and not sensation.

For any proper understanding of Bergson’s thought, it is necessary to grasp his views regarding Time, for they are fundamental factors in his philosophy and serve to distinguish it specially from that of previous thinkers. One might say it is the corner-stone of his philosophy, for practically the whole of it is built upon his conception of Time. His first large work, Time and Free Will, which appeared in 1889, was his major statement on this issue.

Our ordinary conception of Time, that which comes to us from the physical sciences, is, Bergson maintains, a false one. It is false because so far from being temporal in character, it is spatial. We look upon space as a homogeneous medium without boundaries; yet we look on Time too, as just such another medium, homogeneous and unlimited. This creates a problem—since homogeneity consists in being without qualities, it is difficult to see how one homogeneity can be distinguished from another. This difficulty is usually avoided by the assertion that homogeneity takes two forms, one in which its contents co-exist (space), and another in which they follow one another (time). Space, then, is that homogeneous medium in which we are aware of side-by-sideness. And time is that homogeneous medium in which we are aware of an element of succession. But this differentiation also makes for difficulties, for we are then distinguishing two supposed homogeneities by asserting a difference of quality in them. To do so is to take away homogeneity. This calls for another kind of solution. If space is taken as a homogeneous medium without bounds, then every homogeneous medium without bounds must be space. If this is so then time becomes space. Bergson asserts that it is so, for our common view of time is a false one, being really a hybrid conception, a spurious concept due to the illicit introduction of the idea of space, and to our application of the notion of space, which is applicable to physical

objects, to states of consciousness, to which it is really inapplicable. Objects occupying space are marked out as external to one another, but this cannot be said of conscious states. Yet, in our ordinary speech and conventional view of things, we think of conscious states as separated from one another and as spread out like “things,” in a fictitious, homogeneous medium to which we give the name “time”. Bergson says, “At any rate, we cannot finally admit two forms of the homogeneous, time and space, without first seeking whether one of them cannot be reduced to the other. Now, externality is the distinguishing mark of things which occupy space, while states of consciousness are not essentially external to one another and become so only by being spread out in time regarded as a homogeneous medium. If, then, one of these two supposed forms of the homogeneous, namely, time and space, is derived from the other, we can surmise that the idea of space is the fundamental datum. Time, conceived under the form of an unbounded and homogeneous medium, is nothing but the ghost of space, haunting the reflective consciousness” (Time and Free Will 98). According to Bergson, Kant’s great mistake was to take time as a homogeneous medium (Time and Free Will 232).

Having asserted the falsity of the view of time ordinarily held, Bergson proceeds to explain his view of what Real Time is. This is one

of the most difficult sections of his philosophy. An initial difficulty meets us in giving a definite name to the time which Bergson regards as so real, as opposed to the spatial falsity, masquerading as time, whose true colours he has revealed. In the original French text Bergson employs the term *duree* to convey his meaning. "Duration" is usually employed by translators as the nearest approach possible in English.

The distinction between the false Time and true Time may be regarded as a distinction between mathematical Time and living Time, or between abstract and concrete Time, or between clock-time and mental time. This living, concrete Time is that true Time of which Bergson endeavours to give us a conception as *la duree*. He criticises the abstract mathematical Time, and proceeds to explain what he really considers Time to be. Time, Real Time, which is radically different from space, cannot be any homogeneous medium. It is heterogeneous in character. We are aware of it in relation to ourselves, for it has reference not to the existence of a multiplicity of material objects in space, but to a multiplicity of a quite different nature, entirely non-spatial, namely, that of conscious states. Being non-spatial, such a multiplicity cannot be composed of elements which are external to one another as are the objects existing in space. States of consciousness are not in any way external to one another. Indeed, they interpenetrate to

such a degree that even the use of the word “state” is apt to be misleading; there can be strictly no states of consciousness, for consciousness is not static but dynamic. It is, as William James termed it, “a stream” and herein lies the essence of Bergson’s *duree*—the Real as opposed to the False Time. “Pure Duration” (*la duree pure*), he says, “is the form which the succession of our conscious states assumes when our Ego lets itself live, when it refrains from separating its present state from its former states. For this purpose, it need not be entirely absorbed in the passing sensation or idea, for then, on the contrary, it would no longer “endure.” Nor need it forget its former states; it is enough that in recalling these states, it does not set them alongside its actual state as one point alongside another, but forms both the past and the present states into an organic whole, as happens when we recall the notes of a tune, melting, so to speak, into one another. Might it not be said that even if these notes succeed one another, yet, we perceive them in one another, and that their totality may be compared to a living being whose parts, although distinct, permeate one another just because they are so closely connected?” (Time and Free Will 100) Such a duration is Real Time.

Unfortunately, obsessed as we are by the idea of space, we introduce it unwittingly and set our states of consciousness side by side

in such a way as to perceive them alongside one another; in a word, we project them into space and we express *duree* in terms of extensity and succession thus takes the form of a continuous line or a chain—the parts of which touch without interpenetrating one another (Time and Free Will 100). This is how the “hybrid” conception of False Time comes into being. Real Time, *la duree*, is not, however, susceptible like False Time to measurement, for it is, strictly speaking, not quantitative in character, but is rather a qualitative multiplicity. Real Duration (*la duree reele*) is just what has always been called Time, but it is Time perceived as indivisible.

Certainly pure consciousness does not perceive time as a sum of units of duration, for, left to itself, it has no means and even no reason to measure time, but a feeling which lasted only half the number of days, for example, would no longer be the same feeling for it. It is true that when we give this feeling a certain name, when we treat it as a thing, we believe that we can diminish its duration by half, for example, and also halve the duration of all the rest of our history. It seems that it would still be the same life only on a reduced scale.

But we forget that states of consciousness are processes and not things; that they are alive and therefore constantly changing, and that,

in consequence, it is impossible to cut off a moment from them without making them poorer by the loss of some impression and thus altering their quality (Time and Free Will 196). *La duree* appears as a “wholly qualitative multiplicity, an absolute heterogeneity of elements which pass over into one another” (Time and Free Will 229). Such a time cannot be measured by clocks or dials but only by conscious beings, for “it is the very stuff of which life and consciousness are made.” Intellect does not grasp Real Time—we can only have an intuition of it. “We do not think Real Time—but we live it because life transcends intellect” (Time and Free Will 229).

In order to bring out the distinctly qualitative character of such a conception of Time, Bergson says, “When we hear a series of blows of a hammer, the sounds form an indivisible melody in so far as they are pure sensations, and here again give rise to a dynamic progress; but, knowing that the same objective cause is at work, we cut up this progress into phases which we then regard as identical; and this multiplicity of elements no longer being conceivable except by being set out in space—since they have now become identical—we are, necessarily, led to the idea of a homogeneous Time, the symbolical image of *la duree*” (Time and Free Will 125). He continues:

Whilst I am writing these lines, the hour strikes on a neighbouring clock, but my inattentive ear does not perceive it until several strokes have made themselves heard. Hence, I have not counted them and yet I only have to turn my attention backwards, to count up the four strokes which have already sounded, and add them to those which I hear. If, then, I question myself carefully on what has just taken place, I perceive that the first four sounds had struck my ear and even affected my consciousness, but that the sensations produced by each one of them, instead of being set side by side, had melted into one another in such a way as to give the whole a peculiar quality, to make a kind of musical phrase out of it. In order, then, to estimate retrospectively, the number of strokes sounded, I tried to reconstruct this phrase in thought; my imagination made one stroke, then two, then three, and as long as it did not reach the exact number, four, my feeling, when consulted, was qualitatively different. It had thus ascertained, in its own way, the succession of four strokes, but quite otherwise than by a process of addition and without bringing in the image of a juxtaposition of distinct terms. In a word, the number of strokes was perceived as a quality and not as a quantity; it is thus that *la duree* is presented to immediate consciousness and it retains this form so long as it does not give place to a symbolical representation, derived from extensity. (Time and Free Will 127-8).

In these words Bergson endeavours to drive home his contention that *la duree* is essentially qualitative. He is well aware of the results of

“the breach between quality and quantity,” between true duration and pure extensity. He sees its implications in regard to vital problems of the self, of causality and of freedom. Its specific bearing on the problems of freedom and causality we shall discuss in the following chapter. As regards the self, Bergson recognizes that we have much to gain by keeping up the illusion through which we make our conscious states share in the reciprocal externality of outer things, because this distinctness and solidification enables us to give them fixed names in spite of their instability, and distinct names in spite of their interpenetration. Above all it enables us to objectify them, to throw them out into the current of social life. But just for this very reason we are in danger of living our lives superficially and of covering up our real self. We are generally content with what is but a shadow of the real self, projected into space. Consciousness, goaded on by an insatiable desire to separate, substitutes the symbol for the reality or perceives the reality only through the symbol. As the self thus refracted and thereby broken in pieces, is much better adapted to the requirements of social life in general, and of language in particular, consciousness prefers it and gradually loses sight of the fundamental self which is a qualitative multiplicity of conscious states flowing, interpenetrating, melting into one another, and forming an organic whole, a living unity or

personality. It is through a consideration of *la duree* and what it implies that Bergson is led on to the distinction of two selves in each of us.

Towards the close of his Time and Free Will, Bergson points out that there are finally two different selves, a fundamental self and a social self. We reach the former by deep introspection which leads us to grasp our inner states as living things, constantly becoming, never amenable to measure, which permeate one another and of which the succession in *la duree* has nothing in common with side-by-sideness. But the moments at which we thus grasp ourselves are rare; the greater part of our time we live outside ourselves, hardly perceiving anything of ourselves but our own ghost—a colourless shadow which is but the social representation of the real and largely concealed Ego. Hence our life unfolds in space rather than in time. We live for the external world rather than for ourselves, we speak rather than think, we are “acted” rather than “act” ourselves. To act freely, however, is to recover possession of one’s real self and to get back into *la duree reele*. (Time and Free Will 232)

Real Time, then, is a living reality, not discrete, not spatial in character—an utter contrast to that fictitious “Time” with which many thinkers have busied themselves, setting up “as concrete reality the

distinct moments of a Time which they have reduced to powder, while the unity which enables us to call the grains ‘powder’ they hold to be much more artificial. Others place themselves in the eternal. But as their eternity remains, notwithstanding, abstract since it is empty, being the eternity of a concept which by hypothesis excludes from itself the opposing concept, one does not see how this eternity would permit of an indefinite number of moments co-existing in it, an eternity of death, since it is nothing else than the movement emptied of the mobility which made its life” (An Introduction to Metaphysics 51-54).

The true view of Time, as *la duree*, would make us see it as a duration which expands, contracts, and intensifies itself more and more; at the limit would be eternity, no longer conceptual eternity, which is an eternity of death, but an eternity of life and change—a living, and therefore still moving, eternity in which our own particular *duree* would be included as the vibrations are in light. Speaking in Matter and Memory on the tension of *la duree*, Bergson calls attention to the “trillions of vibrations” which give rise to our sensation of red light (272), an eternity which would be the concentration of all *duree*.

Finally, Bergson reminds us that if our existence were composed of separate states, with an impassive Ego to unite them, for us there

would be no duration, for an Ego which does not change, does not endure. *La duree*, however, is the foundation of our being and is, as we feel, the very substance of the world in which we live. Associating his view of Real Time with the reality of change, he points out that nothing is more resistant or more substantial than *la duree*, for our *duree* is not merely one instant replacing another--if it were there would never be anything but the present, no prolonging of the past into the actual, no growth of personality, and no evolution of the universe. *La duree* is the continuous progress of the past which gnaws into the future and which swells as it advances, leaving on all things its bite, or the mark of its tooth. This being so, consciousness cannot go through the same state twice; history does never really repeat itself. Our personality is being built up each instant with its accumulated experience; it shoots, grows, and ripens without ceasing.

For our consciousness this is what we mean by the term "exist." "For a conscious being, to exist is to change, to change is to mature, and to go on creating oneself endlessly" (Creative Evolution 8). Real Time has, then, a very vital meaning for us as conscious beings, indeed for all that lives, for the organism which lives is a thing that "endures." The true instrument of Metaphysics is intuition. We can only grasp ourselves, Bergson points out, by a metaphysical intuition, for the soul eludes

thought; we cannot place it among concepts or in a category. Intuition, however, reveals to us Real Time (*la duree*) and our real selves, changing and living as free personalities in a Time which, as it advances, creates.

Intuition is in no way mysterious, Bergson claims. Every one of us has had opportunities to exercise it in some degree. For Kant, Intuition was infra-intellectual, but for Bergson it is supra-intellectual. As far as Bergson is concerned, Time and Change lead up to Intuition.

While these thinkers provided a theoretical framework which could inform the aesthetic attitudes of stream of consciousness writers, Heidegger took the question of time (and space) from where Locke and Bergson left off. Martin Heidegger's Being and Time (1927) is an exploration of the meaning of being as defined by temporality, and is an analysis of time as a horizon for the understanding of being. But his works did not have a direct bearing on the leading stream of consciousness writers who had produced their best fiction before those works came out.

A truly intuitive philosophy would bring science and metaphysics together. Modern science dates from the day when

mobility was set up as an independent reality and studied as such by Galileo. But men of science have mainly fixed their attention on the concepts, the residual products of Intuition, the symbols which have lent a symbolic character to every kind of science. Metaphysicians, too, have done the same thing. Hence it was easy for Kant to show that our science is wholly relative and our metaphysics entirely artificial. For Kant, science was a universal mathematic and metaphysics a practically unaltered Platonism. The synthetic Intuition was hidden by the analysis to which it had given rise. For Kant, Intuition was infra-intellectual, but for Bergson it is supra-intellectual. Kant's great error was in concluding that it is necessary for us, in order to attain Intuition, to leave the domain of the senses and of consciousness. This was because of his views of Time and Change. If Time and Change really were what he took them to be, then Metaphysics and Intuition alike are impossible. For Bergson, however, Time and Change lead up to Intuition; indeed it is by Intuition that we come to see all things. Such a philosophy will not be merely a unification of the sciences.

For the stream of consciousness writers, these views about the essential "subjectiveness" of experience is a central concern; so are the philosophical observations about intuition and the moment of vision—epiphany, in religious terminology. Time is seen as a linear,

irreversible flow. "You cannot step into the same river twice", said Heraclitus, giving metaphoric shape to this uni-directional conception, "for other waters and yet other waters go ever flowing on." But time is a great unifier, bringing human societies together in inescapable bonds of contemporaneity. At the same time it is an extremely subjective experience as well, a very private and incommunicable one. The first, clock-time dimension is its public face, and the second, mind-time dimension, its personal aspect. Novelists have explored and made use of these aspects in varying degrees, but it is the stream of consciousness group that has tried to resolve these apparently antithetical versions into an integrated vision.

CHAPTER TWO

“THOSE TOOLS ARE NOT OUR TOOLS”:

SEARCH FOR FORM

Marvin asks Sam if he has given up his novel, and Sam says, ‘Temporarily.’ He cannot find a form, he explains. He does not want to write a realistic novel, because reality is no longer realistic.

—Norman Mailer, The Man Who Studied Yoga (quoted in Lodge 3)

Stream of consciousness writing is usually regarded as a special form of interior monologue and is characterized by associative (and at times dissociative) leaps in syntax and punctuation that can make the prose difficult to follow, tracing as they do a character’s fragmentary thoughts and sensory feelings. Stream of consciousness and interior monologue are distinct from dramatic monologue, where the speaker is addressing an implied interlocutor.

The earliest precedent of any literary work using this technique is possibly Ovid’s Metamorphoses in ancient Rome. Sir Thomas Browne’s

discourse The Garden of Cyrus (1658), with its rapid, unconnected association of objects, geometrical shapes and numerology, could well be considered an early example of stream of consciousness writing. Another would be The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman by Laurence Sterne, (1760). Other early examples of this style are The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket by Edgar Allan Poe (1837/1838) and Édouard Dujardin's Les Lauriers sont coupes (1888). Tolstoy used something similar to the stream of consciousness technique in Anna Karenina (1877) in the portions leading to the climax; another early example is Arthur Schnitzler's 1900 short story Leutnant Gustl. Stream of consciousness writing gained rapid prominence in the twentieth century. Famous writers to employ this technique in the English language include Virginia Woolf, James Joyce and William Faulkner. The popularity of this form as a medium of fictional expression corresponds with the advances in the field of philosophical thinking, especially the search for what is significant in life—what is real. It claims to represent reality, as opposed to traditional writing that has been rather given to artificialities. They often use time (“clock-time”) as a structural device rather than as a natural and inevitable order of “happenings”.

Text-time imitates clock-time. Just as we cannot live except from yesterday through today to tomorrow, we cannot speak, or write, or read, except in unidirectional manner. We read letter after letter, word after word, sentence after sentence, and chapter after chapter. Stream of consciousness writers, like some “experimental” writers earlier, have attempted to break this tyranny of time, to liberate narrative from constraints of temporal sequentiality. A total liberation would mean total breakdown of intelligibility—one of the possible reasons why Finnegans Wake does not seem to make sense. In Beckett’s Watt also, there are some sections where Watt, at least partly demented, reverses the order of words in the sentence, letters in the word, sentences in the paragraph, and so on. But, as if to serve the purpose of intelligibility, the narrator explains these inversions to the reader before reproducing them. (Beckett 162-6). Rimmon-Kenan cites the example of the Argentine writer Julio Cortazar’s novel Hopscotch where he “defies linearity by making the order of the *chapters* variable. In a ‘Table of Instructions’ preceding the novel, he writes:

In its own way this book consists of many books, but two books above all.

The first can be read in a novel fashion and ends with chapter 56...

The second should be read by beginning with chapter 73 and then following the sequence indicated at the end of each chapter... (Quoted in Rimmon-Kenan 45)

In the field of the novel it was perhaps Thomas Sterne who first tried to render “reality” without moral or formal preconception. The ideas of Locke influenced Sterne’s writing. He acknowledged that personality existed and manifested itself in Time. But, as Thomas Mann in the twentieth century demonstrated, Time is not a single mode. As a condition of consciousness, it is measured on two and perhaps more clocks, quite differently paced. “In our computations of time we are...used to minutes, hours, weeks and months”, says Tristram, the protagonist of Sterne’s novel. But he implies that there is something in us that is aware of time only by the intensity and fullness of being; when we speak of having had “a very good time” we mean we have had no sense of time at all. Sterne tried to redefine the relation between human personality and external reality. As A A Mendilow pointed out in his Time and the Novel, Sterne’s aim was to give as true a picture as possible of true human beings, not as they imagine themselves to be, nor as others judge them to be. This meant a shifting of emphasis from the external to the internal event, from the patterned plot artificially imposed on the characters, to the free evocation of the fluid, ever-changing process of being. It also brought him face to face with the

problem of the limitations of language. He had to investigate how best to communicate this process through a language that can only deal in products; to find out the ways by which a sequential medium like language could be manipulated to express simultaneity and the flow of human consciousness.

Like Sterne, the stream of consciousness writer of the twentieth century was preoccupied with the problems of time in fiction. While Sterne drew inspiration from Locke's associative psychology and its corollary of the "time-shift" technique, the stream of consciousness writer was inspired by Bergson's *la duree* and the theory of intuition. Both challenged the formal principles of narration based on the sequential relating of successive events. Both abandoned the closed pattern of the plot. Both are concerned with psychological time and duration rather than with chronological time and separated moments. They attempt to convey the effect of an all-pervading present, of which past and future are part.

What interests Sterne is the discrepancy between chronological and psychological time, both for the reader and for the characters. The exploitation of the principle of psychological time allows him to vary

his tempo by telescoping clock-time to accord with the artistic effect he wishes to produce. In an early fragment Sterne wrote:

Glasses can make an inch seem a mile. I leave it to the future ages to invent a method for making a minute seem a year. (Quoted in Mendilow 11)

He did not leave it to future writers. In Tristram Shandy he was to invent the method himself. By playing the different values of psychological and chronological time against each other, and by emphasising the differences between them, he can at will convey a sense of urgency and hurry, or of relaxation, waiting and suspense.

Judged chronologically, Tristram Shandy has neither beginning, middle, nor end. Sterne breaks up the story and the constituent little episodes and scenes into disjointed fragments. The shifting points of reference in the narration are complicated by the shifting points of reference in the real time of the narrator. The real and fictive elements are amusingly contrasted.

The twentieth century novel saw new experiments to suit the new understanding of reality. There was a fresh search in fields such as

psychology and anthropology to define the reality of life. Psychologists like William James came forward with their own findings about the primacy of the mind over matter. With a redefining of real life, then, there was also a new attempt at finding new modes of expression that will suit this perspective. David Daiches, in his The Novel and the Modern World tries to analyse this attempt. “The modern novelist is born when that publicly shared principle of selection and significance is no longer felt to exist, can no longer be depended on” (Daiches 5). According to him, “... the three major factors that have influenced and in a sense produced the modern novel—the breakdown of public agreement about what is significant in experience and therefore about what the novelist ought to select, the new view of time, and the new view of the nature of consciousness—co-operate to encourage the novelist to concentrate on aspects of the human situation which were not the major concern of earlier novelists ... and to discover new techniques for achieving their new aims” (Daiches 10).

While philosophers and thinkers had tried to redefine life, time and reality, writers too sought to focus on what is found to be real. The stream of consciousness fiction is such an attempt. A pioneer in the field, Dorothy Richardson, brought a whiff of “modernity” to the English novel with her thirteen-novel sequence Pilgrimage. Her

reputation as a writer rests firmly on this work. The first of the Pilgrimage novels, Pointed Roofs (1915) is considered the first stream of consciousness novel in English, although Richardson herself disliked the term, preferring to call her way of writing “interior monologues”. She anticipated Virginia Woolf in another respect as well: in attempting to find in the stream of consciousness mode an antidote to the male narratology. Richardson can also be read as a feminist writer, not because she overtly calls for equal rights for women but because her work quite simply assumes the validity and importance of female experiences as a subject for literature, and departs significantly from a kind of stale narrative that Virginia Woolf later identified with male writers. The central character in Pilgrimage, Miriam, is a woman in search of her own full identity, which she knows quite clearly cannot be defined in male terms of reference. She thus becomes a persona for the novelist herself. Richardson’s wariness of the conventions of language, her bending to near breaking point of the normal rules of punctuation, sentence length, and so on, are means towards what she termed feminine prose, which she clearly saw as necessary for the expression of this female experience.

But this type of experimental writing had its roots in the bold narrative of the eighteenth century maverick Laurence Sterne. His The

Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman (Tristram Shandy for short) was published in nine volumes, the first two appearing in 1760, and seven others following over the next ten years. The novel did not go down well with “established” writers like Samuel Johnson who commented, “Nothing odd will do long”. But the serious – indeed, the philosophical gravity – of Sterne’s work cannot be ignored. His text is filled with allusions and references to the leading thinkers and writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Thinkers including Locke were major influences on Sterne and Tristram Shandy. Swift’s sermons and Locke’s Essay Concerning Human Understanding contributed ideas and frameworks that Sterne explored throughout his novel. Sterne’s engagement with the science and philosophy of his day was extensive, however, and the sections on obstetrics and fortifications, for instance, indicate that he had a grasp of the main issues then current in those fields.

Four influences on Tristram Shandy overshadow all others: Rabelais, Cervantes, Montaigne’s Essays and John Locke. Sterne had written an earlier piece called A Rabelaisian Fragment, which indicates his familiarity with the work of the French monk. The novel makes brilliant use of John Locke’s theories of empiricism, or the way we assemble what we know of ourselves and our world from the

“association of ideas” that come to us from our five senses. Sterne is by turns respectful and satirical of Locke’s theories, using the association of ideas to construct characters’ “hobby-horses,” or whimsical obsessions, that both order and disorder their lives in different ways. The novel, as it stands, is seen by some as an elaborate and ingeniously-executed pun. Today, the novel is seen as a forerunner of later stream of consciousness, self-reflexive and post-modern writing. Virginia Woolf hailed the book as “The Greatest of all Novels.”

The psychological novel was exemplified by Marcel Proust’s Remembrance of Things Past, which had an enormous influence on many such novelists. Another forerunner was Henry James, who created what he called a “central consciousness” or a governing intelligence, a character that he would stay with throughout a story or novel and whose mind we would thus be limited to in our perception of the action of the novel. The subject of these novels often was precisely the inner thoughts and emotions of the character rather than any external events. Long passages would be devoted to the rendition of these inner states of mind, such as in the famous fireside scene in James’s Portrait of A Lady wherein Isabel must consider her choices. The term “stream of consciousness” was first used by William James,

Henry's brother. He did not use it to describe novels but the workings of the mind.

As a mode of writing stream of consciousness, thus, was at one time identified with experimentation and with innovative thinking. By its very nature it defied the traditional norms of linear or chronological narrative and structure, and took liberties with time sequence. A literary technique that seeks to describe an individual's point of view by giving the written equivalent of the character's thought processes, stream of consciousness is strongly associated with the modernist movement. Its introduction in the literary context, transferred from psychology, is attributed to May Sinclair.

Stream of consciousness writing aims to provide a textual equivalent to the stream of a fictional character's consciousness. It creates the impression that the reader is eavesdropping on the flow of conscious experience in the character's mind, gaining intimate access to their private "thoughts". It involves presenting in the form of written text something that is neither entirely verbal nor textual. Stream of consciousness writing was developed in the early decades of the twentieth century when writers became interested in finding ways of laying open for readers' inspection, in a way impossible in real life, the

imagined inner lives of their fictional characters. The challenge was to find ways of writing that would create plausible textual presentations of the imagined consciousness-streams.

Stream of consciousness writing comes in a variety of stylistic forms, most importantly narrated stream of consciousness and quoted stream of consciousness (better known as “interior monologue”). Narrated stream of consciousness is most often composed of a variety of sentence types including psycho-narration (the narrative report of characters’ psychological states) and free indirect style. Interior monologue is the direct quotation of characters’ silent speech, though not necessarily marked with speech marks. “Interior monologue” is sometimes mistakenly used as a synonym for stream of consciousness writing as such. In fact it is just one of the forms of stream of consciousness writing.

Though the term “stream of consciousness” has a certain intuitive appeal as it helps to identify in a rather general way what it was that writers aimed to achieve in their fiction. However, there is no agreed precise definition of the term. It might be more useful to understand the effect that stream of consciousness writing tries to achieve and to see why there are so many technical variants of it.

The term “stream of consciousness” was initially used in psychology, to convey what was taken to be the flow of conscious experience, of what William James called “mind stuff”, in the brain. The term was introduced in James’s The Principles of Psychology (1890) to denote the continuous flow of thoughts, feelings and impressions which, he believed, is what makes up our inner lives. James was aware of the complexity of this “stream”. It does not consist of a single stream of consecutive items; many items may coexist. The stream is divided at any moment into those things that are the focus of attention and those which are part of the field of consciousness even though they are not consciously attended to.

Writers in the first decades of the twentieth century became fascinated by these inner lives of impressions, and by the mental activities of signification (meaning-making) which constitute our private inner lives. Under the influence of William James, Henri Bergson and other psychological thinkers of the time, the idea developed that the very essence of life and personality was to be found in these activities of the mind. It was felt that fiction should attempt to render in words character’s inner worlds as experienced by the fictional characters themselves. Attempts were made to represent both the form and the content of the flow of “mind stuff”, employing a variety of

newly explored and developed literary techniques. Writers such as Dorothy Richardson, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Katherine Mansfield and William Faulkner each developed their own versions of this new “stream of consciousness” writing.

May Sinclair first used the term in a literary context in her 1918 review of the first three volumes of Dorothy Richardson’s novel, Pilgrimage. Richardson herself was scornful of the term “stream of consciousness” but her work in itself illustrates the point that stream of consciousness writing is not a single stylistic or technical form. Pioneering writers in this period of radical change and constant innovation developed a variety of ways of presenting consciousness in fiction. In some passages Dorothy Richardson employed startling, innovative and bold techniques to capture the stream of thoughts of her protagonist Miriam Henderson. These techniques attempt to mimic not just the content but also the form of Miriam’s thoughts, using unconventional punctuation and spelling, variable line spacing, incomplete, hesitant and fragmented sentence forms and slangy idiolect. For example, in this passage (from the first volume, Pointed Roofs published in 1915), Miriam is thinking about religion and the Church:

Then nothing matters. Just one little short life....

A few more years shall roll...

A few more seasons pass....

There was a better one than that ... not so organ-grindery.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories fade away;
Change and decay in all around I see.

Wow-wow-wow-whiney-caterwauley....

Mr Brough quoted Milton in a sermon and said he was a materialist Pater said it was a bold thing to say.... Mr Brough was a clear-headed man. She couldn't imagine how he stayed in the Church She hoped he hated that sickening, sickening, idiot humbug, Eve ... meek ... with silly long hair ... "divinely smiling" ... Adam was like a German ... English too Impudent bombastic creature... a sort of man who would call his wife "my dear". There was a hymn that even pater liked ... the tune was like a garden in the autumn

O ... Strength and *Stay*—up— ... Holding—all
Cre—ay—ay—tion Who ... ever Dost Thy ...
self—un ... Moved—a—Bide Thyself unmoved
abide Thyself unmoved Abide ... Unmoved
abide Unmoved abide Unmoved Abide ...
(151).

This is an example of narrated stream of consciousness. (Miriam is referred to as “she” and the tense is the past tense of narration, yet in spite of the mediation of a narrator the text gives access to the character’s thought stream.) In later works Richardson employed quoted stream of consciousness or “interior monologue”, a different device for rendering the character’s thought stream which uses the first person and present tense, as if the character’s thoughts are being quoted directly with no mediation of a narrator. Here is an example from the 1919 volume The Tunnel:

I *must* have been through there; it’s the park. I don’t remember. It isn’t. It’s waiting. One day I will go through. Les yeux gris, vont au paradis. Going along, along, the twilight hides your shabby clothes. They are not shabby. They are clothes you go along in, funny; jolly. Everything’s here, any bit of anything, clear in your brain; you can look at it. What a terrific thing a person is, bigger than anything. How *funny* it is to be a person. You can never not have been a person. Bouleversement. It’s a fait bouleversant. *Christ*-how-rummy. It’s enough. Du, heilige, rufe dein Kind zurück, ich habe genossen das irdische Glück; ich habe geliebt und geliebt ... Oh let the solid ground not fail beneath my feet, until I am quite sure. ... Hallo, old Euston Road, beloved of my soul, my own country, my native heath (68).

The passage displays typical features of interior monologue, such as the use of the present tense and of deictic words (“there”, “here”) which refer to the character’s present location in time and place. There are also truncated sentences, a rambling pattern of thoughts and associations, ellipses, and emphases that mimic not just the stream of thought but its rhythms and stresses. The reader interprets the passage as mimetically representing the character’s own rather chaotic thought-processes.

As the difference between these two examples shows, the term “stream of consciousness” does not refer to any one specific style or technique of writing. It refers to the fact that each passage in its own way attempts to render in words the continuous flow of thoughts and perceptions in the mind of the character. In all its forms stream of consciousness writing invites the reader to interpret the text as a verbal equivalent of the psychological stream in the mind of a character, but there can be no such thing as a “transcription” or “record” of this stream. The psychological stream and the textual stream are quite different in crucial respects. For example, the psychological stream contains many items that are not verbal. Often, non-verbalised sensations, images and feelings are among the most significant items in the stream and yet they must be rendered, in the textual stream, as a

string of words. Again, and this is of greater relevance to us, the psychological stream, unlike its textual equivalent, is not a linear, consecutive flow of distinct items. Within the stream many items coexist – the metaphor suggests both a complex surface and a depth, rather than, as in older metaphors from which James was trying to escape, a chain or a string of distinct ideas.

All textualised streams of consciousness exhibit a duality or hybridity, being open to interpretation in terms of two origins: the mind of the protagonist and that of the narrator or implied author. The text shows or quotes the fictional character's present mind stream, while at the same time an implied author or narrator makes some intervention or contribution to the selection, verbalisation and organisation of the textual stream.

Let us take a look at another example of narrated stream of consciousness style. This passage is from Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. Here the Catholic protagonist Stephen approaches the confessional in a state of some anxiety.

At last it has come. He knelt in the silent gloom and raised his eyes to the white crucifix suspended above him. God could see that he was sorry. He would tell all his sins.

His confession would be long, long. Everybody in the chapel would know then what a sinner he had been. Let them know. It was true. But God had promised to forgive him if he was sorry. He was sorry. He clasped his hands and raised them towards the white form, praying with his darkened eyes, praying with all his trembling body, swaying his head to and fro like a lost creature, praying with whimpering lips. (96)

Only the whole context informs the reader that this is best interpreted as the stream of Stephen's conscious experience, combining explicit verbal thoughts reported indirectly ("Let them know. It was true"), with perceptions and sensations ("silent gloom", "trembling body", "swaying his head to and fro") that are part of his stream of experience but not of his articulated, verbal thoughts. The narrated sentences are offered as a verbal equivalent for his inner life.

In conveying Stephen's meditations, Joyce uses shifts in time, deliberately jumbling Stephen's meditations and his consciousness of the world around him in a non-chronological sequence in order to give an impression of stagnation (before the stimulus of the retreat). Thus, the opening of the section in Chapter III where Stephen sits at dusk in class, thinking of his secret visits to prostitutes and of his leadership of the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary, presents the hero feeling a

premonition of fear about the coming retreat. As he looks out of the classroom window, into the dusk, while the activity of the classroom alternates with his thoughts about his sins, including recollections of the immediate past. In the paragraph before the rector's arrival (to announce the retreat), he sees himself sitting in class watching the rector's face, while he reflects on religious questions. These reflections are interrupted by the excited cries that the rector is coming.

In more complex cases of narrated stream of consciousness the variety of grammatical forms within the stream of consciousness passage is greater, and can include narrative scene-setting, psychonarration ("he thought", "she wondered" and so on), narrated images and dialogue as well as free indirect style. D.H. Lawrence's "The Odour of Chrysanthemums" has a passage. A wife, shocked by her husband's sudden death, is contemplating his body and thinking about the years they have spent together.

And all the while her heart was bursting with grief and pity for him. What had he suffered? What stretch of horror for this helpless man! She was rigid with agony. She had not been able to help him. He had been cruelly injured, this naked man, this other being, and she could make no reparation. There were the children — but the

children belonged to life. This dead man had nothing to do with them. He and she were only channels through which life had flowed to issue in the children. She was a mother – but how awful she knew it now to have been a wife. And he, dead now, how awful he must have felt it to be a husband. She felt that in the next world he would be a stranger to her. If they met there, in the beyond, they would only be ashamed of what had been before. [...] She saw this episode of her life closed. They had denied each other in life. Now he had withdrawn. An anguish came over her. It was finished then: it had become hopeless between them long before he died. Yet he had been her husband. But how little! (83)

It is clear that one is to read this passage as the stream of the character's silent, private thoughts. But note the indeterminacy – just how much of this verbal chain does the character speak silently to herself? When we are told that “she saw this episode of her life closed” it is probably best interpreted as a moment of vision or insight (“she saw...”) rather than as presenting an articulated thought. Such epiphanous moments are not rare in more sustained stream of consciousness fiction. This could well be one of those “mute visions that are engendered in fictional minds” (Cohn 51), that are so vividly presented in this style of stream of consciousness writing in which the free indirect style presentation of character's thoughts alternates with

the psycho-narration of non-verbal insight. In the next chapter we shall observe the significance of the moment in the scheme of Virginia Woolf's time-treatment. As Cohn says "...psycho-narration may be regarded as the most direct, indeed the unique path that leads to the sub-verbal depth of the mind" which apprehends the insightful moment (Cohn 56). It is one of the virtues of narrated stream of consciousness that the border between verbal and sub-verbal layers of the mind is left indistinct. For example, in the example from Lawrence, when it is said that "she felt that in the next world he would be a stranger to her", it could be interpreted as an articulated thought in the character's mind, or as some combination of fleeting visual image, diffuse feeling and truncated verbal thought. This sort of indeterminacy could well be an advantage of narrated stream of consciousness style. The narrative moves smoothly from telling us the character's articulated thoughts to telling us about thoughts and feelings that lie below the level of verbalised consciousness, about subliminal or even subconscious thoughts and images. Lawrence's narrative style seamlessly combines the narration of thoughts with the narration of sensations and images ("She was rigid with agony", "An anguish came over her", and so on).

In this kind of writing the mind is implicitly pictured as layered. Some thoughts are presented as being, as Woolf liked to put it, "on the

floor of the mind”, others as being explicitly spoken by the character. It emphasises the non-verbal quality of much of what we have in mind and also the puzzling, apparently paradoxical, quality of consciousness – that it contains virtual as well as explicit thoughts, thoughts that are both in consciousness and yet are not (or not wholly, or not focally or not yet) conscious thoughts.

The second main form of stream of consciousness writing is “quoted stream of consciousness” or “interior monologue”. This form employs direct quotation in the first person of the character’s own thoughts, sometimes without this being overtly indicated by the use of speech marks. This form represents a character’s inner life as a flow of inner speech that is quoted in the first person, as a monologue. It is as if the reader can overhear thoughts as they pass through the character’s mind. Other aspects of the character’s stream of consciousness, the sensations, feelings and images and so on, are either ignored or are presented in adjacent passages in a different style. The interior monologue can be intermixed in different ways and in varying amounts with other narrative matter. In Ulysses, probably the most famous interior monologue text, there are in the various sections quite different ways of combining or incorporating the interior monologue into its third person narrative context. An example would be the “Hades”

section of Ulysses. The protagonist Bloom walks with others in a funeral party through a cemetery in Dublin:

Hynes shook his head.

—Parnell will never come again, he said. He's there, all that was mortal of him. Peace to his ashes.

Mr Bloom walked unheeded along his grove by saddened angels, crosses, broken pillars, family vaults, stone hopes praying with upcast eyes, old Ireland's hearts and hands. More sensible to spend the money on some charity for the living. Pray for the repose of the soul of. Does anybody really? Plant him and have done with him. Like down a coalshoot. Then lump them together to save time. All soul's day. Twentyseventh I'll be at his grave. Ten shillings for the gardener. He keeps it free of weeds.
(25)

The passage opens with a narrative report about a character called Hynes and this is followed by spoken dialogue (marked in Joycean fashion with a dash at the beginning and a paragraph break at the end.) It then moves into narrative scene-setting, distinguished, as is typical in Joyce, by its lyricism. On first reading it is difficult to know whose words these are (“... old Ireland's hearts and hands”), but the reader comes to understand that this scene-setting provides essential contextual information that enables us to make sense of what Bloom is

thinking. Only then do we move into the presentation of Bloom's thoughts ("More sensible to spend the money..."). Bloom's interior monologue is distinguished by grammatical contraction and incompleteness as well as by his down to earth, sceptical attitude.

The most celebrated of all interior monologue passages is the one that quotes Molly Bloom's lengthy night-time thought streams in the "Penelope" section of Ulysses. The passage is unique not only in its length (some forty pages in most editions) but also in the complete absence of any overt narrative mediation. There is no third person narrative intervention at all. Moreover, there is an almost complete absence of punctuation, and the effect of this is to suggest the uninterrupted flowing on and on of Molly's thought stream. This interior monologue section, however, would be unintelligible were it not for the broader surrounding narrative context in the rest of the novel. Given below is a short extract:

O and the sea the sea crimson sometimes like fire
and the glorious sunsets and the figtrees in the Alameda
gardens yes and all the queer little streets and pink and
blue and yellow houses and the rosegardens and the
jessamine and geraniums and cactuses and Gibraltar as a
girl where I was a flower of the mountain yes when I put

the rose in my hair like the Andalusian girls used or shall I wear a red yes and how he kissed me under the Moorish wall and I thought well as well him as another and then I asked him with my eyes to ask again yes and then he asked me would I yes to say yes my mountain flower and first I put my arms around him yes and drew him down to me so he could feel my breasts all perfume yes and his heart was going like mad and yes I said yes I will Yes.
(143)

What interior monologue presents in a strict sense is not the characters' stream of consciousness but only that part of consciousness that takes the form of silent speech—the pre-speech level of consciousness.

Narrated stream of consciousness and quoted stream of consciousness are thus two distinct styles, clearly demarcated by their different grammatical and narrative features. However, there is no reason why they should not be used together. There are indeed many works in which writing moves from one to the other, usually when presenting a change from one distinct kind of thought process to another. Here is an inventive and dazzling example of a mixed style of stream of consciousness writing, from Ford Maddox Ford's Parade's End, one of the great innovative, experimental novels of the modernist

period. He often shifts between narrated and quoted streams of consciousness. Here the ellipses hint that we should interpret this as stream of consciousness even early in the passage when it might otherwise be taken to be narration.

She was trembling...She looked, fumblingly opening it, into the little mirror of her powder-box—of chased, very thin gold with a small blue stone, like a forget-me-not in the centre of the concentric engravings...Drake—the possible father of Michael—had given it to her...The first thing he had ever given her. She had brought it down tonight out of defiance [...] She said breathlessly to herself: “Perhaps the damn thing is an ill omen...” Drake had been the first man who had ever... A hot-breathed brute!...In the little glass her features were chalk-white... She looked like... she looked like... She had a dress of golden tissue...The breath was short between her white set teeth...Her face was as white as her teeth...And... Yes! Nearly! Her lips...What was her face like?[...] She said to herself: “He was near fainting...I’m near fainting...What’s this beastly thing that’s between us?...If I let myself faint...But it would not make the beasts face any less wooden!...” (346)

The most obvious sign that the narration has moved into stream of consciousness here is not the use of free indirect speech but the

punctuation, the abundance of ellipses, dashes, and exclamation marks, which are the textual equivalent of patterns of thought, of fragmentation and emphasis. In the narrated form the narration can move smoothly between scene setting and the narration of the character's actions into the narration of her stream of thoughts narrated in free indirect style. This leaves it usefully ambiguous as to how explicitly she articulates some of these thoughts to herself. Does she say to herself "I have brought it down tonight out of defiance"? More likely, we should read this as a wordless thought, but the text itself does not tell us. The narration informs us what she sees (her white face in a mirror) and moves seamlessly into what she thinks about this. In the quoted form (indicated with quotation marks) we have her own words as her thoughts jump rather hysterically from thought to incomplete thought expressed in her own upper-class slangy idiolect and this conveys very precisely the quality of her thought, her anger and bitterness.

Stylistic differences between different versions of stream of consciousness writing derive from the different ways writers adopt for viewing inner lives. The impulse behind all of its varieties and technical ingenuities was the desire to find a way of representing the movements and complexities of characters' inner lives. Their

perception of time thus becomes a centrepiece in stream of consciousness novels, whatever methods and styles they might adopt.

Most commonly fictional streams of consciousness have been of particular kinds, inwardly attentive, reflective, ruminative, solitary and detached from engagement with practical life, from talk and activity. The most celebrated examples of stream of consciousness prose are all of these kinds. Molly Bloom's interior monologue (Joyce's Ulysses) presents her night-time flow of thoughts in bed, in the dark, next to her sleeping husband. There is minimal external input to disturb the free flow of her thoughts. In Virginia Woolf's To the Lighthouse Mrs Ramsay is depicted settling down in solitude and withdrawing into herself after all the busy-ness of the day's family life is done with, and it is this disengagement that allows her thoughts to freely associate and to rise up from the floor of her mind. Woolf's Mrs Dalloway and Richardson's Miriam Henderson are each depicted in typical passages as solitary idlers, walking through the streets of London. Different writers imagine their characters' solitary reflections differently, and find different ways of presenting them in writing.

In Katherine Mansfield's stories (and in those by Joyce in Dubliners) the stream of consciousness often exhibits for the reader

subtle movements of the mind in moments of entrapment and denial, with patterns of repetition and evasion and cliché. The following is a passage from Mansfield's story "The Garden Party":

There lay a young man, fast asleep—sleeping so soundly, so deeply, that he was far, far away from them both. Oh, so remote, so peaceful. He was dreaming. Never wake him up again. His head was sunk in the pillow, his eyes were closed; they were blind under the closed eyelids. He was given up to his dream. What did garden parties and baskets and lace frocks matter to him? He was far from all those things. He was wonderful, beautiful. While they were laughing and while the band was playing, this marvel had come to the lane. Happy ... happy ... All is well, said the sleeping face. This is just as it should be. I am content.

But all the same you had to cry, and she couldn't go out of the room without saying something to him. Laura gave a loud childish sob.

"Forgive my hat," she said. (Mansfield 65.)

The textual stream of consciousness displays not only the character's thought stream and the almost hypnotic euphoria which it conjures up ("Happy ... happy...") but also suggests the activity of mind (panicky evasion) that is creating them.

A stream is not always an appropriate metaphor for consciousness. There are three main problems with this metaphor. For one, it suggests the idea of continuous flow, which is what William James had in mind. But he knew that consciousness also has a structure that is not at all stream-like, namely a structure continually being rebuilt around our shifts of attention or focus. Consciousness has a foreground and background and a motion of constant reconfiguration. The linearity suggested by the metaphor of a stream and by the linearity of the written text is misleading because we hold many things in mind at the same time, with different degrees of attention and clarity. Writers had to find ways of exploiting the linearity of the text to suggest ways in which thoughts and feelings are held together and move together in the mind. This is one problem faced also by the writers in tackling stream of consciousness.

Secondly, consciousness is directed most of the time not at itself or at items in the inner mind but at external items in the world with which we engage. There may well be a constant movement of mental activity, of meaning-making and interpretation going on in our conscious minds, but most of the time this is not what we attend to, or not focally.

Thirdly, not all of the thoughts and feelings and perceptions that we seem to have in mind are in the full sense things that we are consciously aware of. There are many ways of having something in mind with less than full awareness. Thoughts and feelings can be subliminal (below the threshold of consciousness) and yet virtually conscious (we could turn our attention to them—as in driving while thinking about something else). They can be fleeting, unacknowledged, unrecognised, unfocused as well as subconscious. We can be angry without knowing consciously that that is what we are feeling. We can contain some desire within a fleeting image without consciously owning up to that desire. We can cultivate a mood of sceptical hostility by entertaining a series of questioning thoughts without necessarily spelling these out in the crafted sequence within which they can be arranged in written form.

It may be that consciousness is radically heterogeneous, not so much a single stream as a competitive confluence of the products of different processors in the mind-brain, some of which more conscious than others. Conscious “mind stuff” has perhaps more than one origin. However much we may try to connect up our thoughts and ideas into coherent sequences, it seems unlikely that this is regularly achieved. Some of the above examples of narrated streams of consciousness have

shown how it is possible to present consciousness as involving different kinds of thought processes, as layered, multidimensional. Consciousness is more heterogeneous than is suggested by the metaphor of the stream. Some of the experiments in stream of consciousness writing (as that by Ford Maddox Ford cited above) were attempts to do justice to this felt heterogeneity.

Finally, all textual streams of consciousness employ, as no psychological stream does, the devices of layout, punctuation and font style to tell the reader how to interpret the textual stream. So textual streams of consciousness are never directly mimetic, not even the minimally punctuated stream of Molly Bloom's interior monologue (in Joyce's Ulysses), which is often misrepresented as though it involved no authorial intervention. The absence of punctuation simply means that the reader has to read and reread the text in order to decide how to perform it in mind with intelligible stress patterns and pauses. It cannot be read as a single even flow of words.

The test for whether any particular passage is stream of consciousness writing is not the employment of any particular grammatical or textual means, but whether the reader finds it best to interpret the passage as representing a character's stream of thought

and experience. Does it show what a character has in mind, displaying the character's own meanings (thoughts, sensations, images and so on)? This is quite often uncertain and contested by different readers and therefore analysis of texts is often full of disagreement and ambiguity.

Stream of consciousness writing has been considered here mainly in relation to the work of writers in the modernist period in the first decades of the twentieth century. In subsequent decades the techniques invented by those writers have been adopted by and further developed by many writers. However, stream of consciousness mode seems to have lost its distinctness in later writings.

Textualised stream of consciousness is an artefact, a creation of writing. It is worth wondering to what extent we think of our inner lives on the model of a stream of consciousness not because this is something we are aware of in our own experience but because this is a way of viewing mental life so often proposed in fiction. It is difficult if not impossible for us to stand back from our inner lives and watch them as they flow past us. We can never have, in relation to our own inner lives, the relation that we have to those of fictional characters. Once challenged to quote our own thoughts we would usually quickly realise just how little we know of what passes through our minds. This might

seem counter-intuitive. We might assume that our own flowing streams of consciousness must be what of all things we are most intimately and immediately acquainted with. But, strange as it may seem, our own minds are among what Woolf called “the dark places of psychology”. What modernist writers were attempting to do was not to transcribe or record translucent streams of consciousness but to use new forms of writing as ways of exploring imagined minds. Fictional streams of consciousness are inventions, thought experiments, instruments of research, used by writers to propose ways of viewing conscious life.

Some of these problems are explored wittily in David Lodge’s comic novel Thinks (2001) in which a cognitive scientist, interested in theories of consciousness, becomes interested in literary streams of consciousness too. He even attempts to capture his own stream of consciousness in writing. He is aware, however, that consciousness, though we might think it the most immediately knowable thing in our lives, is actually extremely unknown. It is something we pay little attention to in the ordinary course of events – we are too busy attending to other things (the meeting, the family, the conference paper, the shopping). The project of writing down one’s own stream of consciousness immediately exposes its own paradoxical nature. As the scientist discovers, writing down, textualising, his own conscious

experience, is no mere transcription. The very fact of speaking into a Dictaphone or sitting in front of a computer with the intention of transcribing thoughts, immediately alters those thoughts. He finds that he selects and organises them, using narrative conventions. He also finds that he has, paradoxically, to divide his consciousness into two, into the thought stream and the work on the text. He has simultaneously to think and to textualise his thinking. Comically he finds that he is trying to talk on the phone to his wife while at the same time talking into his Dictaphone. He looks out of his window and sees his lover walk past – is he to watch her and plan his contacts with her or to attempt to put into words his sensations and memories on seeing her? How is it possible for the mind both to attend to things and to create in words a record of its attentiveness to things? The difficulty is obvious. In writing his stream of consciousness he is not transcribing his inner life but creating it, first as conscious experience and then as text. His experiment itself determines in part the direction and content of his thoughts.

The object of the exercise being to try and describe the structure of, or rather to produce a specimen, that is to say raw data, on the basis of which one might begin to try to describe the structure of, or from which one might infer the structure of ... thought. Is it a stream as William James

said or as he also rather beautifully said like a bird flying through the air and then perching for a moment then taking wing again, flight punctuated by moments of ... incidentally how is the audiotypist going to punctuate *this*? I'll have to give instructions, say put dots for a short pause [...]

Anyway, I played back the tape on the Pearlorder just now, and I must say it was absolutely riveting ... though of doubtful experimental value, alas ... It's not just that the experiment itself partly determines the direction and content of your thoughts ... it's that by articulating them ... however informally ... by articulating them in speech you're already at one remove from the phenomenon of consciousness itself ... because ... well because every phrase I utter, however fragmentary and inconsequential it may seem, is the output of a complex interaction ... consultation ... competition ... between different parts of my brain ... It's like a bulletin, an agreed text hammered out behind closed doors after a nanosecond's intense editorial debate, and then released to the speech centres of the brain for forward transmission ... And that editing process is impossible to record or observe, except as a pattern of electro-chemical activity (Lodge Thinks 83).

David Lodge discusses such issues further in his Consciousness and the Novel and in his The Novelist at the Crossroads. In the latter he

suggests that “the novel, being fictive, is committed to rendering experience with an enhanced sense of order and harmony, and this obligation pulls the novelist in the opposite direction, towards a heightened version of experience and a heightened use of language. Thus the novelist is constantly divided between two imperatives—to create and invent freely, and to observe a degree of dignified decorum” (Lodge, The Novelist at the Crossroads 66). Stream of consciousness novels are an attempt to resolve this tension at a level of perception different from that of conventional ones.

Dominic Head points out a few examples for more recent “experimental” novels that make use of consciousness streams and manipulation of time. In John Fowles’s Daniel Martin (1977) there is an important symbolic scene at an abandoned site of Amer-Indian habitation in New Mexico. Daniel Martin, on a quest for personal authenticity, and the means by which this quest might be advanced in the form of a novel, sees the ancient site of Tsankawi as hugely significant to his goals. He begins to long for a particular kind of medium, “something dense, interweaving, treating time as horizontal, like a skyline; not cramped, linear and progressive”. The longing is inspired by the ancient inhabitants of Tsankawi, and “their inability to think of time except in the present, of the past and future except in

terms of the present-not-here” (Fowles 371). As Head says, this approach to temporality creates “a kind of equivalency of memories and feelings, a totality of consciousness that fragmented modern man has completely lost” (Head 2).

Findings about consciousness and explorations in narrative styles have undergone drastic revision; but the use of consciousness as the canvas of life and as the filter for points of view makes stream of consciousness fiction still relevant.

An extension of John Fowles’s awareness of the novel’s unique treatment of time is found in Paul Ricoeur’s explanation of mimesis in narrative fiction, which emphasises the reader’s role in the process of generating meaning:

In Ricoeur’s account, mimesis is understood as ‘representation’ rather than ‘imitation’. To account for the procedure more fully, Ricoeur separates mimesis into three stages. Mimesis1 concerns routinely acquired human skills of perception and self-consciousness: the pre-understanding of action and the need for it to be mediated in articulation, and a pre-understanding of the human experience of time. Mimesis2 is the configuration of action in the plotting and composition of the work itself. Of particular importance to this level is how the fictive present in a work of narrative fiction supplies

a framework for conjoining recollection and anticipation: it is this capacity to treat time horizontally that emulates our authentic experience of Being in time. The process of reading then supplies a bridge to mimesis³. This is the stage of 'refiguration' in Ricoeur's terms, the point of intersection between the world of the text and the world of the reader. In this model, narrative asserts its full meaning when it is restored to the time of action and suffering in mimesis³; and an essential feature of this restoration is a quest for personal identity in the act of reading and interpretation – that is, in our assuming responsibility for a story.

Ricoeur's three-stage mimesis, then, begins with our worldly experience of time and action; it then shows how these elements of pre-understanding are drawn on the composition of a text; and, finally, it stresses a return to the world of the reader in the active process of reception and interpretation. (Head 11)

Fowles's The French Lieutenant's Woman (1969) is another landmark work that crystallizes the gathering mistrust of authorial omniscience. In this novel, which emulates (while parodying) the achievements of Victorian realism, Fowles also seeks to extend those achievements by adding into the compositional equation a measure of self-consciousness appropriate to the twentieth century. (See Head 2.)

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As a creative writer, Virginia Woolf was sensitive to the inadequacy of conventional fictional modes. She was dissatisfied with the traditional novels because in her view they do not reflect reality. “In Virginia Woolf more than in any other English novelist the writer of fiction faces squarely the problem of the breakdown of a public sense of significance and its consequences for the novel” (Daiches 187). Reality itself is to be freshly defined. “What is meant by reality?” she asks in “A Room of One’s Own”, and then goes on suggest that it has no direct correlation with what we externally perceive as significant: “It [reality] would seem to be something very erratic, very undependable—now to be found on a dusty road, now on a scrap of newspaper in the street, now a daffodil in the sun...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 hedge; 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” (Collected Essays II 112).

The nineteenth century European novel was felt to misrepresent the fluid nature of consciousness and its experience of time. Novelists were therefore compelled to search for new techniques. The interest in

the nature of perception was stimulated by the writings of William James in America and Bergson in France towards the turn of the century. In 1890, William James had published his Principles of Psychology in which he compared consciousness to “a river or a stream”, implying that it carries with it submerged and floating memories and receives a fluid series of impressions of the outer world. The term “stream of consciousness” derived from James’s theory was later applied to a new literary form evolved by Dorothy Richardson and James Joyce. Virginia Woolf adopted this form because of her feminist zeal, for she believed that the conventional form had been exploited and conditioned by men for their exclusive purposes. In “A Room of One’s Own” Virginia Woolf observed about Jane Austen that “The novel alone was young enough to be soft in her hands.” (Collected Essays II 116). Moreover, and this is perhaps a more valid reason, she found that she could not be true to the characters she portrayed unless she focussed on their consciousness. The stream of consciousness form brings us closer to life. In this form she found herself quite at home since it provided a medium which was flexible enough for her. As we learn from J K Johnstone (93-4) the Bloomsbury aesthetics also called upon the writers to find their own appropriate form.

Conventional writers like Bennett, Wells and Galsworthy are “materialists” because, Virginia Woolf said, they are concerned with the body and not with the spirit. They ignore the real consciousness, and, by attributing a chronological order to what is essentially a flux, “by spreading out time in space” as Bergson puts it (Time and Free Will, quoted in Kumar, Bergson 30), they misrepresent the real life:

Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad of impressions...so that, if a writer were a free man and not a slave (of convention), there would be no plot, no comedy, no tragedy, no love interest or catastrophe in the accepted style... Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. (Collected Essays II 106)

Again:

What the novelist has to do is to “convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit” called consciousness. (Collected Essays II 106)

Here, what Virginia Woolf disapproved of in the Edwardian novelists is mainly that they stuck to the convention of chronological time (“matter”); what she set out to convey is the time-defying nature of consciousness which Shiv Kumar finds similar to the Bergsonian *la durée* (Bergson 31).

The novelist using stream of consciousness seeks to create the illusion that we are overhearing the flood of sensations and uncensored, pre-rational thoughts within a character’s mind before the character has ordered them into any coherent form or shape. Thus the novelist will dispense with grammar, with logic, with neat, orderly sentences and predictable pauses. Joyce lets Molly Bloom run on for one extended sentence of 64 pages in *Ulysses*. Woolf refers to this aspect of stream of consciousness when she talks to the reader in her 1924 essay “Character and Fiction” and says that “in the course of your daily life this past week you have had far stranger and more interesting experiences than the one I have tried to describe. You have overheard scraps of talk that filled you with amazement. You have gone to bed at night bewildered by the complexity of your feelings. In one day thousands of ideas have coursed through your brains; thousands of emotions have met, collided, and disappeared in astonishing disorder.” Woolf in her novels tries to suggest this flood of the daily internal

experiences of any ordinary person, an experience wherein “thousands of ideas have coursed through your brains; thousands of emotions have met, collided, and disappeared in astonishing disorder” (Caughie 178)

In “Character in Fiction,” (later rewritten as “Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown”) Virginia Woolf wrote that the writers of her time must put aside the tools used by writers in the past. Arguing with Arnold Bennett, she said that it was important to try to describe the particular character of individual subject, for example, Mrs Brown, and that one could not do so by resorting to the usual conventions of narrative. As in “Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown,” she says that the Victorians and the Edwardians have failed to truly capture character, and in “Character,” she uses the example of Hilda Lessways, a character in an Arnold Bennett novel of the same title. After quoting from the novel, Woolf points out that in all Bennett’s description of Hilda’s house and its cost and the surroundings,

we cannot hear her mother’s voice, or Hilda’s voice; we can only hear Mr Bennett’s voice telling us facts about rents and freeholds and copyholds and fines... he is trying to make us imagine for him; he is trying to hypnotise us into a belief that, because he has made a house, there must be a person

living there. With all his powers of observation, which are marvellous, with all his sympathy and humanity, which are great, Mr Bennett has never once looked at Mrs Brown in her corner. (Collected Essays IV 330)

Mrs Brown is Woolf's emblem for "human nature," and she says that the Edwardian writers (such as Bennett and Wells and Galsworthy)

have looked...out of the window; at factories, at Utopias, even at the decoration and upholstery of the carriage; but never at her, never at life, never at human nature...they have developed a technique of novel-writing which suits their purpose; they have made tools and established conventions which do their business. But those tools are not our tools, and that business is not our business. For us those conventions are ruin, those tools are death. (Collected Essays IV 330)

Later in the essay Virginia Woolf argues that these Edwardian tools of writing

are the wrong ones for us to use. They have laid an enormous stress upon the fabric of things. They have given us a house

in the hope that we may be able to deduce the human beings who live there. To give them their due, they have made that house much better worth living in. But if you hold that novels are in the first place about people, and only in the second about the houses they live in, that is the wrong way to set about it. Therefore, you see, the Georgian writer had to begin by throwing away the method that was in use at the moment.

(Collected Essays IV 332)

She goes on to say how the Georgian writers of her time (from 1910 on) were having difficulty, because they did not yet have new tools with which to replace the old. E M Forster (her friend) and D H Lawrence (who had a powerful contempt for Woolf) spoiled their early work by trying to use the old tools instead of throwing them away. But at least they were trying to rescue poor Mrs Brown. And in trying to find ways to capture the reality of Mrs Brown, writers will cause “smashing and crashing” in their destruction of literary conventions. “Grammar is violated; syntax disintegrated...” She refers to Joyce’s “indecenty” in *Ulysses* and Eliot’s obscurity in “The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock” and The Wasteland. Of Joyce’s indecenty she writes that “it seems to me the conscious and calculated indecenty of a desperate man who feels that in order to breathe he must break the

windows.” She says that these “failures and fragments”—the works of writers trying to free themselves, and literature, and human character—Mrs Brown—from oppressive conventions are “the sound of their axes” as they try to rescue Mrs Brown. In other essays Woolf refers to writers like Bennett, Wells, and Galsworthy as “materialists” and to her contemporaries Dorothy Richardson and James Joyce as “spiritualists.” (See, for instance, the essay “Modern Fiction”, Collected Essays I.)

Before the early 1900s, fiction emphasised plot as well as detailed descriptions of characters and settings. Events in the external world, such as a marriage, murder, or deception, were the most important aspects of a story. Characters’ interior, or mental, lives served mainly to prepare for or motivate such meaningful external occurrences. Woolf’s novels, however, emphasised patterns of consciousness rather than sequences of events in the external world. Influenced by the works of French writer Marcel Proust and Irish writer James Joyce, among others, Woolf strove to create a literary form that would convey inner life. To this end, she found stream of consciousness, recording an immensely suitable vehicle. Her novels do not limit themselves to a single consciousness, but move from character to character, using interior monologues to present each person’s differing responses, often to the same event. Her specific contribution

to the art of fiction was this representation of multiple consciousnesses hovering around a common centre.

Along with the philosophical investigation into the nature of time and of reality, there have also been attempts to attune narrative techniques to these new perceptions—attempts that made an impact on the themes and techniques employed by fiction writers. These attempts began on both sides of the Atlantic, and well before the birth of the twentieth century. There are similarities between Emerson, for instance, and twentieth-century British writers like Virginia Woolf. Emerson and the transcendentalist movement, like the Bloomsbury group to which many experimentalists including Virginia Woolf belonged, seemed to be thinking along similar lines with regard to their understanding of what constitutes reality. Emerson's essays and the novels and essays of Virginia Woolf share certain key questions and approaches. Woolf had met Emerson and studied his work (and both knew and admired Thomas Carlyle). In her essays and novels, Woolf pursues the questions Emerson pursued before her, values what Emerson values. Both writers were haunted by the problem of perception, and this provides a touchstone to their work. The act of perception is crucial to our human existence, not only in terms of our individual awareness but also in terms of our interactions with others. Woolf shares this belief with

Emerson; when she criticised the novelists of her time in her famous essay, “Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown,” she berated them specifically for a failure of perception, a failure to see. These writers had “... there [Mrs Brown] sits and not one of the Edwardian writers has so much as looked at her.” For Emerson as well as for Woolf, this failure was important, because “perception is not whimsical, but fatal.” (Collected Essays IV 333) Despite the subjective limitation, we must try to see and distinguish as accurately as we can.

The experience of Emerson’s city boy is like the experience of Woolf’s “ill person” in the essay, “On Being Ill”:

[T]he whole landscape of life lies remote and fair, like the shore seen from a ship far out at sea....” Like Emerson, Woolf advocated the process of trying to see with disinterestedness. Illness can be valuable because it can alter our perception: “In illness...we float...irresponsible and disinterested and able, perhaps for the first time in years, to look round, to look up,—to look, for example, at the sky” (Collected Essays IV 197).

Perception is crucial because it is what constitutes lived experience; it is also often what distinguishes one individual from another. Emerson asked, “What is life but the angle of vision?”

Similarly, Woolf addresses herself to the requirement of seeing without finally committing herself to any single definitive rule. In her novel To The Lighthouse Woolf creates a character, Lily Briscoe, who is a painter with the difficulty of completing a troublesome canvas. Throughout the novel, Lily has been trying to see something, to determine what the painting needed. At the end of the novel, she suddenly

saw it clear for a second, she drew 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. (Lighthouse 209)

Lily has seen, has had her vision, but the reader is not saddled with any specific directive as to what the ultimate vision must be. Woolf wished us to understand that the act of perceiving is what is important, not that we see exactly what Lily sees in the Ramsays.

Both writers insisted on the importance of remaining contemplative and open to seeing possibilities. “That mind is best which is most impressionable,” Emerson wrote. Virginia Woolf’s novels assert that even the smallest impressions can be of great importance. Henry James had written that “Everything is the proper

stuff of fiction,” (quoted in Woolf Collected Essays III 10) and Woolf went far in rendering the mind as it receives nearly every kind of impression. Creating a novel within the framework of one day in the life of Clarissa Dalloway, she used many quite small impressions in very important ways. Woolf rendered Clarissa’s impressionable mind. Like the earlier romantics, Woolf often used details such as flowers to demonstrate the power of contemplation. Clarissa spends time at a florist’s, and we are made to see the flowers. Clarissa’s perception of the flowers tells us much about Clarissa herself. In “On Being Ill” Woolf wrote,

Let us examine the rose. We have seen it so often flowering in bowls, connected it so often with beauty in its prime, that we have forgotten how it stands, still and steady, throughout an entire afternoon in the earth. (Collected Essays IV 197)

The benefits of such intense observation are that we can see something as if for the first time; everyday objects can become new and different for us. It is important to see the thing for itself; both Emerson and Woolf strived to exercise that special disinterestedness. Clive Bell, reviewing one of Woolf’s essays wrote:

Now Mrs. Woolf sees more purely, or if you will, less passionately. At all events, her emotion is not in the least self-regarding. She watches life, as it were through a cool sheet of glass; let those who dare, call the glass distorting...Assuredly, she feels the romance of the situation, but she does not share the romantic feelings of the actors (Clive Bell 76).

Woolf and Emerson were interested in the dynamics of how one goes about seeing through one small item the entirety of life or the world. It is the ability to see which accomplishes this, the ability for which Bell praised Woolf, and the ability Conrad Aiken said Woolf imparted in To The Lighthouse:

the tragic futility, the absurdity, the pathetic beauty, of life—we experience all of this in our sharing of seven hours of Mrs Ramsay’s wasted or not wasted existence.

We have seen, through her, the world. (Clive Bell 77)

Both Emerson and Woolf discussed the existence of forms in nature, and seem to share a Coleridgean appreciation of organic form. In her essay “The Sun and the Fish” Woolf seems to echo Emerson:

Nothing exists needlessly. The fish themselves seem to have been shaped deliberately and slipped into the world only to be themselves. They neither work nor weep. In their shape is their reason. For what other purpose except the sufficient one of perfect existence can they have been thus made...? (Collected Essays IV 182)

Woolf's statement, "in their shape is their reason," asserts that "Every form is a history of the thing." The purpose, history or destiny of the fish is revealed in their shape or form. Their shape expresses their reason, or their history. How expressive is form! "In their shape is their reason" (Collected Essays IV 182).

In predicting a novel that would begin explorations of the inner world and of forms, Emerson foresaw twentieth century novels such as those by Virginia Woolf, in which interior reality, thought processes, form the basis of the work.

Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind, in the order I which they fall...every feeling, ...every quality of brain and spirit is drawn upon; no perception comes amiss (Common Reader I 190).

Emerson argued against “novels of costume merely” just as Woolf later argued against the novels of the Edwardian realists. Both were dissatisfied with novels that attempted to render reality through externals rather than through the internal workings of minds.

In “The Narrow Bridge of Art” Woolf defined what a new kind of novel would be like. It would be like poetry, though still written in prose. It would be neither sociological nor psychological; it would “express the feeling and ideas of the character closely and vividly, but from a different angle” (Collected Essays II 226). Like Emerson, Woolf recognized that the angle of vision was all-important, and this was the problem she attempted to clarify. The new novel will resemble poetry in this that it will give not only or mainly people’s relations to each other and their activities together, as the novel hitherto has done, but it will give the relation of the mind to general ideas and its soliloquy in solitude. For under the dominion of the novel we have scrutinized one part of the mind... closely and left another completed unexplored. We have come to forget that a large and important part of life consists in our emotions toward such things as roses and nightingales, the dawn, the sunset, life, death and fate; we forget that we spend much time sleeping, dreaming, thinking, reading, alone; we are not entirely

occupied in personal relations; all our energies are not absorbed in making our livings...we long for some more impersonal relationship. We long for ideas, for dreams, for imaginations, for poetry (Collected Essays II 226).

The term “impersonal” is revealing. Woolf also had used this notion when she praised Henry James for his ability to separate himself from his work: “In this impersonality the maker himself desired...to take it...wholly, exclusively with the pen...and absolutely not with the person” (Collected Essays II 227). This attitude expresses Emerson’s own idea that the good writer keeps himself out of his work, just as the intellectual is intelligent insofar as he is able to achieve objectively. Emerson felt poets were more likely than novelists to be able to show us forms, and it is significant that Woolf was able to write, “fiction today draws to itself writers who would even yesterday have been poets”.

Thus, Woolf, in changing the form of the novel to include some of the techniques of poetry, helped to bring about a change in the novel’s ability to make us see. In her own novels she was highly conscious of form; in her diaries she often mentioned wrestling with the “design” of the book she was working with. The Waves is a novel that

relies heavily upon the techniques of poetry. It makes use of repetition with variation, using a rising and falling rhythmic language pattern within each of the soliloquies. In this novel Woolf applied the theory she explained in her description of the new novel. Indeed, her novels did approach the form of poetry, and came close to reaching recognizably organic forms. Virginia Woolf conceived a form of novel which should be more organic than the Edwardian novel. In practice her conception of emotional form and the power of the subconscious to select the significant from the insignificant, enabled her to transpose her impressions of life into highly disciplined aesthetic wholes.

When Woolf asserted that “an important part of life consists in our emotions toward such things as roses and nightingales, the dawn, the sunset,” she was, in one sense, emphasizing the power of symbols in our lives. For Emerson, the poet was a symbol-maker who satisfied our need for symbolism. Perception, imagination, and the process of symbolizing are both constant and changing. Nature is a “sea of forms” which is always moving. This can be distressing to one who feels buffeted about by this motion. But for the artist who can explore this sea, as for Emerson’s poet, the flux of Nature and the vague impenetrability of the waves do not cause despair.

Both Emerson and Woolf perceived time not as chronological or sequential but rather as a series of random moments, given meaning by the depth we can perceive. For Emerson, “the soul circumscribes all things.... In like manner it abolishes time and space...time and space are but inverse measures of the force of the soul.” (Essays: First Series). Time is always moving, but not necessarily in the sequential manner. The romantic notion of seeing eternity in the moment or hour is echoed throughout Emerson’s work. If we participate fully in the present moment, we can gain access to eternity; through moments “we pierce to the eternity, of which time is the flitting surface”. Emerson wanted to direct our focus toward the present moment; we miss too much of life in preoccupation with the past. “This passing moment is an edifice which the Omnipotent cannot rebuild”. Woolf also felt that the intensity of the present moment demanded attention:

Yet what composed the present moment? If you are young, the future lies upon the present like a piece of glass, making it tremble and quiver. If you are old, the past lies upon the present like a thick glass, making it waiver, distorting it. All the same, everybody believes the present is something... (Collected Essays III)

It is useless to try to see eternity; “in the eternity of nature,” Emerson wrote, “centuries are lost as moments are” (Essays: First Series). Time is defined as it is “marked by moments of great intensity”. Woolf said these were like Hardy’s “moments of vision.” We might live a long life, but it is meaningless without these intense moments of experience:

In stripping time of its illusions, in seeking to find what is the heart of the day, we come to the quality of the moment, and drop the duration altogether. It is the depth at which we live and not at all the surface extension that imports. (Collected Essays III)

Woolf wrote in her diary, “life—say 4 days out of 7—becomes automatic; but on the 5th day...is all the fuller and more sensitive...” (A Writer’s Diary 176). Intensity builds up like a bead of sensation and exists for a single moment, and then is gone. Our power of perception must constantly be active. To the attentive eye, each moment of the year has its own beauty...every hour, a picture which was never seen before, and which shall never be seen again” (A Writer’s Diary 176).

To see eternity in the moment is to see the moment for itself, to live in the present without being restricted by the past, as well as to see infinity in the finite. When we can truly see a moment, it is unforgettable. Woolf describes here our common wish to imprint in our memory all the detail of a scene before it changes, to arrest a moment in time. To arrest the moment in time, to see it clearly and whole, one must make of it an object. But that would be falsifying the moment. Woolf saw the moment's paradoxical transitoriness and reality analogous to humans:

This has gone on forever; will last forever; goes down to the bottom of the world--this moment I stand on. Also, it is transitory, flying, and diaphanous. I shall pass like a cloud on the waves...we change...so quick...yet we are somehow successive and continuous, we human beings, and show the light through. (Collected Essays III)

The moment is like a symbol of a human life:

...something adheres for a moment, has roundness, weight, depth, is completed. This, for the moment, seems to be my life. If it were possible, I would hand it you entire. I

would break it off as one breaks off a bunch of grapes. I would say, "Take it. This is my life." (Collected Essays III)

Although the moment is a kind of lens focused on eternity, a symbol even of human lives, it is, nonetheless, "transitory, flying, diaphanous." For Woolf the world was in a constant state of flux; a moment could be arrested in time, but it could not be extended: "There is nothing staid, nothing settled in this universe. All is rippling, all is dancing; all is quickness and triumph". Change could transcend even the object or symbol; Emerson said that symbols could become outdated and that poets would have to either revitalize them or provide new symbols. Symbols change because nature changes. "Who looks upon a river in a meditative hour, and is not reminded of the flux of all things?" (Collected Essays III) Emerson saw the universe as "fluid and volatile" (Essays: First Series). Woolf's diary also contains several passages expressing the idea of flux: "how fast and furious and masterly life is; and how all these thousands are swimming for dear life" (A Writer's Diary 177). She, too, saw the universe as a huge sea, constantly changing, in which we are all swimming.

In a world that lacks stability, the individual cannot seek meaning in fixed entities; rather than concentrating only on results, he must realize that “the life of the soul is a progress, and not a station”. Woolf wrote in her diary that “joy’s life in the doing—I murder, as usual, a quotation; I mean it’s the writing, not being read that excites me” (A Writer’s Diary 58).

Woolf’s novels concern consciousness; some, such as Mrs. Dalloway, remain within a single consciousness and show insights into others through this individual consciousness; others, like The Waves, give readers access to separate single consciousnesses and create a kind of multiple consciousness.⁷⁶ This occurs in the famous dinner scene in To The Lighthouse and also in Bernard’s final soliloquy in The Waves, when he tries to find meaning in the separate but shared lies of each of the six characters:

We sat here together. But now Percival is dead, and Rhoda is dead; we are divided; we are not here. Yet, I cannot find any obstacle separating us. There is no division between me and them... Yes, ever since old Mrs. Constable lifted her sponge and pouring warm water over me covered me with flesh I have been sensitive, percipient. Here on my

brow is the blow I got when Percival fell. Here on the nape of my neck is the kiss Jinny gave Louis. My eyes fill with Susan's tears. I see far way, quivering like a gold thread, the pillar Rhoda saw, and feel the rush of the wind of her flight when she leapt. (267)

Through consciousness, we become a part of the imagined permanence of "the eternal renewal, the incessant rise and fall and fall and rise again."

In Woolf's essay "Gas", she wrote that while under the influence of the dentist's laughing gas, we seem to be drawn on in the wake of some fast flying always-disappearing black object, drawn rapidly ahead of us. "We become aware of something that we could never see in the other world; something that we have been sent in search of... we fly on the trail of this truth which, if we could grasp it, we should be forever illuminated. And we rush faster and faster...until...we seem to be crushed between the upper world and the lower world and then suddenly the pressure is lessened...we...emerge into daylight...The truth that was being drawn so fast ahead of us vanishes." (Collected Essays III).

We never catch the thing we chase, although a few look to us as though they may have “caught” it, and we continue searching. We search and we “change...so quick...,” we “rise and fall and fall and rise” like the waves; we are always growing, always moving, and this itself is how we also find whatever permanence may avail.

Such is the “eternal pursuit” indeed for those who are strong enough and willing to begin and continue it. Woolf kept writing novels and essays and never felt she had captured the final answer.

For several decades since, however, advances in the fields of artificial intelligence, cognitive psychology, neurology, and even philosophy, special relativity, and quantum mechanics have altered the understanding of consciousness. The nature of consciousness and memory has undergone substantial redefinition; it no longer reflects a present and a past as perceived by an individual in a given linear moment of time. Consciousness and memory are an amalgam of all individual experience, continuously altered by each experience and each recalled memory. The consciousness of the moment is thereby integrated into memory and this reflects back to the moment. When taken to an extreme, consciousness and memory is but a fiction itself.

Consciousness is an awareness of self either in the now, or an awareness of self in relation to an event that has happened. It is deceptive to think of consciousness of the now as being the present. It is the awareness of the recently happened. Time has elapsed from the moment of the event perceived and the registration of that perception in the mind. We don't recognize the distinction because the synapses and neurons process information at speeds approximating that of light (approximately 670 million miles per hour). At such a speed, the mind, much as it rights the upside-down image conveyed by the optic nerves, easily makes the process appear seamless. The mind smoothes out the distinction for the psychological convenience of dealing with the present as if it were present.

In essence, we never perceive the actual present. We are conscious only of its shadow. "The present—the concreteness of the present as a phenomenon to consider...is for us an unknown planet: so we can neither hold onto it in our memory nor reconstruct it through imagination." (Kundera, Testaments 34)

All consciousness therefore is a form of the past, and therefore subjected to the fictions of memory. "We are conscious of existing in time, moving from a past that we recall very patchily, and into a future

that is unknown and unknowable.” (Lodge, Consciousness and the Novel: Connected Essays 31) That is the aspect of character Woolf and Joyce attempted to capture with their stream of consciousness. There have been developments in cognitive and consciousness studies since, and findings such as “the concrete encounter of self and other [individuals] fundamentally involves empathy, understood as a unique and irreducible kind of intentionality.” (Thompson 2)

It is being argued in the past few decades that Woolf and Joyce—along with James and Freud—had it wrong. “In neurobiological terms, [the mind] is a complex system of billions of neurons between which countless connections are being made simultaneously as long as we are conscience ... The atoms do not fall in a discrete chronological order—they bombard us from all directions, and are dealt with simultaneously by different parts of the brain.” (Lodge, Consciousness and the Novel: Connected Essays 62)

Where does this leave the fiction writers when we still hear the echoes of Woolf’s “Modern Fiction”:

The mind receives a myriad impressions—trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all

sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms...life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the being of consciousness to the end (Common Reader I 189).

In a postmodernist reaction to the modernists, Kingsley Amis and Evelyn Waugh seem to have “abandoned” consciousness in narrative design. They refused to treat it as a representation of the world as humans perceive it. Some writers have gone as far as to abandon the novel as once advocated by Donald Barthleme who was compelled by publishers to write the novel Snow White, it being his anti-novel novel. Their philosophies arose from new theories of cognition, perception, and memory, giving rise to the anti-self and anti-free-will declarations:

The self is a mythical entity...It is a philosophical muddle to allow the space which differentiates ‘my self’ from ‘myself’ to generate the illusion of a mysterious entity distinct from ... the human being. (Kenny 1988.)

Dennett and Marcel in their essay “Time and the Observer” described self as “an abstraction, a centre of narrative gravity”

(Dennett 183-247). And Noe in “Is the Virtual World a Grand Illusion?” deprecated the reality of perceptual consciousness: “Perceptual consciousness is a kind of false consciousness, a sort of confabulation. The visual world is a grand illusion” (Noe 1). Steven Pinker in his The Blank Slate says:

“Language is serving as a slave of an executive, not as the medium of thought...Language is not the prison house of thought...” (210).

Humanity is but the sum of its consciousness and memory. In essence, we are our memories as false as they are. These fictions of the mind define our selves. Perception, consciousness, thoughts and memory thus take apart in a grand game which to some is just a charade but to others the only reality there is. Which attitude could the novelist take?

David Lodge apparently thinks the answer rests in the return to a Jamesian type of approach: The “ambitious and impressive novel [Jonathna Franzen’s The Corrections] together with Ian McEwan’s Atonement, may conceivably herald, or encourage, a return to the third-person novel of consciousness in post-modern literary fiction” (Lodge,

Consciousness and the Novel: Connected Essays 88). In his essay “The Depreciate Legacy of Cervantes”, Milan Kundera put it in another way: “The sole *raison d’etre* of a novel is to discover what only the novel can discover.... Knowledge is the novel’s only morality.” (Kundera, The Art of the Novel 5-6)

There is one step that writers have taken in the light of the confusion abounding in the field of consciousness. They are adopting one so-far crucial element to the thinking of self—the Heisenberg uncertainty principle. It simply states that the position and momentum of an object or event are inherently uncertain because they are affected by the act of observation.

For example, in McEwan’s novel, an omniscient narrator enters into the consciousness of several characters. Then in the epilogue the reader discovers that one of those characters wrote the book. She confesses that she changed the facts, as any novelist would. Therefore the fiction is fiction, an already complicated point if memory is fiction.

Dermot Healy applies a similar principle in A Goat’s Song. In a state of crapulence, tittering between hangover and drunkenness, salmon-fisherman/playwright Jack Ferris awaits longingly for the

return of Catherine Adams to the fishing town of Bellumullet from Dublin. He waits, he drinks, he waits, he drinks, and drinks and drinks. He passes out. He wakes up to find that she has not returned. He travels to Dublin and discovers that she will not return for he is still drinking. Therefore, he is left alone “to transcend. To enter a new story. She must be imagined. He opened a spiral-bound notebook and thought, Here it begins.” (84) In other words, the writer, as the observer, effects the outcome of the experiment, in this case a novel. Ferris is the observer who already has affected the story, freeing him to explore the consciousness of characters whom he pretends to know but whom he does not—all of which is an attempt to understand that which he does not.

This play with the uncertainty of memory and therefore consciousness, whether intended or not, has another example in Olafur Olafsson’s Absolution. It is the memoir of the elderly and dying misanthrope Peter Peterson. He confesses that memories torment him: “An old man’s memories haunt him every day” (Olafsson 242) because “the human mind’s capacity for remembrance is strong” (Olafsson 232). Yet the science surrounding the development of consciousness and memory belies this statement. What the old man remembers actually is an event, the planned betrayal of Jon to the Gestapo, that he

has replayed in his imagination. For more than five decades, he has assumed his plot worked. The memory of the loss love of Gudrun also triggers a synaptic thunderstorm, especially the sense that she felt betrayed by his awkward, if not misogynistic, and failed seduction. Between these two memories he records portions of his life, episodes told in full detail, creating the illusion of relating his life step by step. But as consciousness studies have shown, memory is at best a fiction of what an individual perceives to have happened and that it is impossible to reconstruct, at least accurately, one's life which is merely a series of memories. So the novel quickly becomes a fiction of a fiction.

Olafsson weaves into the plot of the novel an element of the Heisenberg uncertainty by introducing an unnamed Icelander, who is asked to review Peterson's Icelandic memoir. The unnamed translator describes the "random heap of papers" as consisting "of nothing more than the incoherent memoirs of an old man." (Olafsson 11) Does he drop the manuscript into the trash and go on with his other work? No. "When I returned home that evening, I began, as if by instinct, to translate the manuscript. I became so obsessed with it that I found myself revising, amending, and abridging it as if I were its original author. For the next few months, I spent evenings this way..." (Olafsson 12) The translator becomes the Heisenberg observer who affects the

outcome of the experiment, changing its nature by his nature and presence. The translator becomes so much a part of this experiment of memory that he acts “as if [he] were its original author.” This is heightened by the fact that the memoir is written in first person and with interior monologues, which is juxtaposed by the first person narrative and interior monologue of the translator.

To complicate matters further, the translator is pining for a recently lost love. He, like Peterson, is obsessed with memory, and it is affecting his consciousness. Therefore, the character has almost no choice but to become so much a part of the memoir and therefore the memories and consciousness of Peterson that he feels “the Peterson’s words might just as easily have flowed from my own pen.” In essence, he becomes the experiment, the memory and consciousness of Peterson. By the end of the novel, he, like Peterson, is shocked to find that Gudrun has all but forgotten the failed seduction by Peterson. Therefore, memory is flawed.

What can be trusted of the consciousness and memory of Peterson? They have first been filtered through his own perception of being, massaged over four decades, and then refined through the consciousness of the translator. A story remains, but whose story?

Olafsson takes the uncertainty of Peterson's perception and overlays with the uncertainty of the translator perception, in the end leaving the reader with only the one certainty: we are but the summation of our own consciousness only onto ourselves, and we are to others an entirely different memory and consciousness.

A similar level of "consciousness uncertainty" is woven into the novel I, the Divine: A Novel in First Chapters. Here, Rabih Alameddine however employs a different tack. The novel is multi-textual, and can be sometimes seen as a novel and sometimes as a memoir, sometimes in English, sometimes in French, written by the protagonist Sarah Nour el-Din. She, in essence, transforms into the Heisenberg observer of her own life, thereby altering the experiment that is called consciousness. Like life, it is a never-ending experiment. It begins again and again in a series of first chapters to potential novels and memoirs, and with each restart the tone shifts along with the progression of the experiment. Compare the first line of the first "first" chapter, "My grandfather named me for the great Sarah Bernhardt," (Alameddine 3) with the first line of another "first" chapter, "I woke up with a hangover." (Alameddine 254) The first is laced with the perception of a child, the second is portrayed as a perception of fact.

The technique allows Alameddine to give his author a deeper and a cleaner, even if painful, insight into her life. Her consciousness expands. At the same time, as each start enables her to probe deeper, she becomes more knowledgeable of her own memories and consciousness.

In the end, the reader knows that the experiment is not over, that there is more to the story. There is more to the memory of the life lived. That there will be more with the passing of time, all representing the constant shifting of consciousness and memory.

The uncertainty of memory and consciousness is the obvious theme of Dale Peck's Martin and John:

Memory is my only possession, but it resists ownership. I remember the first thing I wrote: this is the worst thing I remember, I wrote, and then I stopped writing. Nothing came after that sentence; nothing ever did. Nothing announced itself as the worst of it all, although many, many things—images, sounds, sensations, sentences even, though I don't remember who first wrote or spoke them—all vied for the honor...[then] I wrote something that

hadn't happened. Everything's been a little confused since then, what's real and what's invented, but it all seems to make more sense too." (Peck 225)

John, the protagonist, has created a puzzle of stories "forced together or merely laid end to end," thereby perpetuating the permutation of two characters, himself and his lover Martin who has died. In some stories, they are older, some younger; sometimes John is Martin, Martin, John. In the end John is infected with AIDS. Could he be hallucinating? Could he be on drugs? Who can say because John does not know! The memories are unclear, leaving John only the possibility of inventing stories to a life diluted by abuse and abandonment, to make sense of the senseless.

John is the Heisenbergian observer who recognizes his own effect. Peck exploits the observer, showing his effects, thereby allowing Peck to deal with a multitude of issues, such as homosexuality in an unfriendly America, the effects of AIDS especially on individuals in the gay community, and finally the uncertainty of the sum of one's life because memory itself is fiction. He basically proves through repeated stories that "the individual human mind is not confined within the head, but throughout the living body and includes the world beyond

the biological membrane of the organism, especially the interpersonal world of self and other.” (Thompson 5)

Consciousness and memory, and all their failings, serve a different master in Toni Morrison’s The Bluest Eye. She is chasing after a sense of truth as Umberto Eco describes:

The artist can succeed in possessing and communicating the truth, but only through beauty...not the truth that...becomes beauty, but of a gratuitous beauty, born from the provocative strength of the imagination which, in fact, becomes the only possible truth. (Eco 13)

The novel was triggered by a memory Morrison had of a childhood African-American friend who, like a character Pecola in the novel, wanted blue eyes. It was for the pain of discovering the racially defined paradigms of beauty that forced some children to disqualify their own beauty that Morrison wanted a special language and in turn a special language for consciousness and memory:

The novel tried to hit the raw nerve of racial self-contempt, expose it, then soothe it not with narcotics but

with language that replicated the agency I discovered in my first experience of beauty. Because that moment was so racially infused (my revulsion at what my school friend wanted...), the struggle was for writing that was indisputably black. I don't yet know quite what that is, but neither that nor the attempts to disqualify an effort to find out keeps me from trying to pursue it. (Morrison 211)

Aside from finding a language that broke from English's racist tendencies, she struggled with the concept of memory itself. To handle a novel that dwelled in the multiple memories and consciousness of her characters, she created what Carl D Malmgren called a polyphony.

The seasonal sections are in the first person, but even they are double-voiced, aware of the difference between the experiencing 'I' and the narrating 'I.' In places Claudia speaks as the nine-year-old girl going through the experience, ignorant, for example as to what 'ministratin' is. Elsewhere, she switches to an adult perspective...And sometimes she speaks from the moment of the enunciation itself.. (Malmgren 475)

She shifts the narrative frequently throughout moving within a few pages from authorial to figural to first person. For example, Morrison resorts to a figural narration when recounting Pauline's (Breedlove) perspective of her life, but as soon as Pauline begins talking to an unnamed and unheard neighbour, Morrison opts for a first-person dramatic monologue. (Morrison 112)

In the sections that start with the 1950s grammar school reading primers, Morrison explores the consciousness of Pauline, Cholly Breedlove, and Soaphead Church using a figural narratives. "Those figural presentations are frequently qualified by authorial interpolations or commentary" (Malmgren 478) as when she wrote "the easiest thing to do would be to build a case out of her foot. This is what she herself did." as Claudia of Pauline said. (Morrison 110) In these sections there's also "no explicit identification of that authorial speaker as the grown-up Claudia." Claudia refuses to identify herself, thereby keeping a distance, even though Claudia as a child or adult could not have been privy to the information it unfolds, making the material of her memory seem more true than it ever could have been. She, however, is not writing in the interest of truth but the interest of understanding, of knowing the why.

In the seasonal sections, which are in diary form, there's a personal view of Pecola. But it's through the eyes of Claudia the older adopting the notions of her presumed nine-year-old self. She projects backwards as it were, which then begs the question of the accuracy of the perspective, even though it nonetheless is true for Claudia. This is precisely the Heisenberg uncertainty: the sense of a truth that may not be true but which is immaterial to the observer.

Morrison probes the consciousness of the individual's further using a multi-textual approach. "It opens with three different version so fits epigraphic 'master' text, several lines drawn from an elementary school [reading] primer. That is followed by an italicized 'overture,' introducing...Claudia.... The body of the novel is composed of two related tests." (Malmgren 488). Within these two master forms, there are other textual applications, such as the letter from Soaphead Church to God, the schizophrenic monologue of Pauline, and the Claudia coda beginning with "So it was."(Morrison 214)

In Blackwater Lightship, Colm Toibin resists using the writer as observer of the experiment. He creates two trinities, one shadowing the other. There's the trinity of Helen and her estranged mom and grandmother juxtaposed to the trinity of the dying Delcan and his

friends, Larry and Peter. Trinity is an inappropriate description of the female group. Helen is on a crucifix of Golgotha with her mother and grandmother at her sides, all looking for salvation. Delcan, Larry, and Peter are the Trinity, Delcan being the transfiguration, the light to salvation for Helen—the salvation of her life with her family, her place, and eventually herself.

The women are being crucified for the most important element of self, empathy for each other and to a lesser degree others. It is the shadow trinity who cares, Delcan for his sister and mother, Larry and Peter for Delcan and the women. It is the shadow trinity that invades the lives of these three women. It's this trinity of gay men—distinctly separated in the Catholic world of Ireland—who affect the experiment of life—helping Delcan to die and Helen to live. But where the other writers relied on a writer to be the observer, to interfere, Toibin relies on another person on the fringe of society, the gay man, who are “both distant and close to a culture at the same time,” making their observations central to a culture rather than peripheral. (Toibin, Love 9) As great as the book is, it falls short of an understanding of Helen's consciousness. It's more an understanding of her consciousness through the consciousness of the omniscient narrator, whom he/she was.

According to the Hobson theory, the genetically determined brain-mind is constantly changing. He also postulates that as with any complex system there are design and program errors which lead to the “gorgeous construct” of self (Brown 72).

It sounds logical. It fits accepted thinking of the mind. It accounts for the brain-mind dichotomy without introducing Descartes’s “ghost in the machine,” that untenable element called the soul. The first two variables have been massaged and handled for more than two centuries, with the emphasis shifting from one to two and back again. But it is the third element that eludes writers. This new elusive notion of memory and consciousness present opportunity for writer’s to explore narrative, plot and consciousness with the multi-textual and multi-vocal approaches. Yet there’s more to this. Must writers wait for the next advance in neurobiology or neuropsychology or artificial intelligence? It is time to wander in that a wilderness of consciousness, leading more to an understanding of what that cascade of thought and feelings and sensations mean, now and not now.

Though theories and findings about consciousness have undergone drastic revision in scientific terms, its use as the canvas of life and as the prism of life-vision makes stream of consciousness

fiction still significant and relevant. This kind of writing aims to provide an approximation in textual form to the stream of a fictional character's consciousness.

While stream of consciousness writing was getting popularised in Europe, there were similar developments across the Atlantic as well. A leading writer of this mode in the U S was William Faulkner. His The Sound and the Fury (1929) makes use of the stream of consciousness narrative technique pioneered by British authors such as James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. The Sound and the Fury takes place in the fictional Yoknapatawpha County. It is split into four sections, shifting the points of view: the first from the viewpoint of Benjy Compson, a mentally retarded man; the second from the point of view of Quentin Compson, a depressed college student; the third from the point of view of their sardonic brother, Jason Compson; and the fourth section from a third person limited omniscient narrative point-of-view, centring on Dilsey, the Compson family's black servant, and expounding on religious faith.

The four parts of the novel relate many of the same episodes, each from a different point of view and therefore with emphasis on different themes and events. This interweaving and non-linear structure

makes any true synopsis of the novel difficult, especially since the narrators are all unreliable in their own way, making their accounts not necessarily trustworthy at all times. The shifting time sequence and shifting viewpoints suggest an indeterminacy about life and perception.

The general outline of the story is the decline of the Compson family, a once noble southern family descended from civil war hero General Compson. The family falls victim to those vices which Faulkner believed were responsible for the problems in the reconstructed South: racism, greed, selfishness and, ultimately, psychological impotence. Especially in regard to the latter, the novel has been often described as having the thematic structure of a Greek tragedy. Over the course of the thirty years or so related in the novel, the family falls into financial ruin, loses its religious faith and the respect of the town of Jefferson, and many of them die tragically.

There are also echoes of existential themes in the novel, as Jean Paul Sartre argues. Sartre in his essay, "On The Sound and the Fury: Time in the Work of Faulkner," states that the technique of the fiction writer always relates back to his metaphysics (79). Faulkner's clock-based or chronological metaphysics of time found in The Sound and the Fury is the focal point of Sartre's criticism of this work. His main

criticism that the novel's metaphysics of time leaves its characters with only pasts and no futures led some Faulkner scholars to seek the future in it while providing their own interpretation of time in Faulkner's work. Sartre comments about "its technical oddity". Why did Faulkner break up the time of his story and scrambled the pieces? Why is the first window that opens out on this fictional world the consciousness of an idiot? As Sartre says, "the reader is tempted to look for guide-marks and to re-establish the chronology for himself" (Sartre, "On The Sound and the Fury 266):

Jason and Caroline Compson have had three sons and a daughter. The daughter, Caddy, has given herself to Dalton Ames and become pregnant by him. Forced to get hold of a husband quickly . . .

"Here the reader stops," says Sartre, "for he realizes he is telling another story":

Faulkner did not first conceive this orderly plot so as to shuffle it afterwards like a pack of cards; he could not tell it in any other way. In the classical novel, action involves a central complication; for example, the murder of old Karamazov or the meeting of Edouard and Bernard in The Coiners. But we look in vain for such a complication in The Sound and the Fury. Is it the castration of Benjy or Caddy's wretched amorous adventure or Quentin's suicide or Jason's

hatred of his niece? As soon as we begin to look at any episode, it opens up to reveal behind it other episodes, all the other episodes. Nothing happens; the story does not unfold; we discover it under each word, like an obscene and obstructing presence, more or less condensed, depending upon the particular case. It would be a mistake to regard these irregularities as gratuitous exercises in virtuosity. A fictional technique always relates back to the novelist's metaphysics. The critic's task is to define the latter before evaluating the former. Now, it is immediately obvious that Faulkner's metaphysics is a metaphysics of time.

Man's misfortune lies in being time-bound. (Sartre, "On The Sound and the Fury 270.)

Sartre goes on to argue that Faulkner presents before us our existential problem of time:

[...] a man is the sum of his misfortunes. One day you'd think misfortune would get tired, but then *time is your misfortune* . . .

Such is the real subject of the book. And if the technique Faulkner has adopted seems at first a negation of temporality, the reason is that we confuse temporality with chronology. It was man who invented dates and clocks. (Sartre, "On The Sound and the Fury 272. Emphasis added.)

Faulkner's characters find that in order to arrive at real time, we must abandon this invented measure which is not a measure of anything. Time is dead as long as it is being clicked off by little wheels; only when the clock stops does time come to life. "Thus, Quentin's gesture of breaking his watch has a symbolic value; it gives us access to time without clocks. The time of Benjy, the idiot, who does not know how to tell time, is also clockless" (Sartre, "On The Sound and the Fury" 270).

What is thereupon revealed to us is the present, and not the ideal limit whose place is neatly marked out between past and future. Faulkner's present is essentially catastrophic. It is the event which creeps up on us like a thief, huge, unthinkable - which creeps up on us and then disappears. Beyond this present time there is nothing, since the future does not exist. The present rises us from sources unknown to us and drives away another present; it is forever beginning anew. "And . . . and . . . and then."

[...] The past takes on a sort of super-reality; its contours are hard and clear, unchangeable. The present, nameless and fleeting, is helpless before it. It is full of gaps, and, through these gaps, things of the past, fixed, motionless and silent as judges or glances, come to invade it. Faulkner's monologues remind one of aeroplane trips full of air-pockets. At each pocket, the hero's consciousness "sinks back into the past"

and rises only to sink back again. The present is not; it becomes. (Sartre, "On The Sound and the Fury" 271)

We have thus a number of great stream of consciousness works in fiction that answer to the name of stream of consciousness fiction, but a few stand out and these have a special concern with time as a matter of great import for human existence. Perhaps we should pause here to define the stream of consciousness fiction as we regard it for our study. It is, to quote Robert Humphrey, "a type of fiction in which the basic emphasis is placed on the pre-speech levels of consciousness for the purpose, primarily, of revealing the psychic being of the characters" (Humphrey 4). Here the focus shifts from motive and action (external man) to psychic existence and experience (internal man): from what the character does to what he is. Virginia Woolf believed that the search for reality is not a matter of dramatic action; it is a psychic activity. The fleeting but vital visions of the human consciousness have to be expressed within the setting of that consciousness.

We might distinguish between two levels of consciousness, as far as the stream of consciousness fiction is concerned: the 'speech level' and the 'pre-speech level'. Though they overlap sometimes, they are

distinct. The pre-speech level does not, as the speech level does, involve any communicative basis—its experiences are not censored, rationally controlled, or logically ordered.

Stream of consciousness fiction, then, is not primarily concerned with the articulate, superficial level of consciousness. Nor is it concerned at all with the unconscious. Thus, Kafka who focuses attention on the unconscious side of the psyche was no writer of the stream of consciousness novel. For this form of novel is not psychoanalytical in technique or objective, 'real life' being a "semi-transparent envelope"—neither the all-concealing superficiality of actions nor the all-revealing exhibition of the deep unconscious. It merely tries to reproduce the flux of experience as it flows in a stream through the unuttered level of consciousness, the river which, as it flows on, laps on the shores of action and utterance.

While the stream of consciousness novel takes as its subject the flow of the stream of consciousness of one or more of its characters, it uses various techniques and is related to developments of the psychological novel prior to Woolf and Joyce's time. Its forerunner was the psychological novel as exemplified by Marcel Proust's Remembrance of Things Past; another was Henry James, who created

what he called a “central consciousness” or a governing intelligence, a character that he would stay with throughout a story or novel and whose mind we would thus be limited to in our perception of the action of the novel. The subject of such novels often was precisely the inner thoughts and emotions of the character rather than any external events.

Other novelists besides James Joyce and Virginia Woolf who are known for being relatively early innovators in the development of stream-of-consciousness narrative are Dorothy Richardson, William Faulkner and Thomas Wolfe. Many others have also worked with the technique.

For Virginia Woolf as a novelist, the problem of time consists not in an artificial ordering of experiences in a chronological framework but, in the words of Henry James, as quoted by Shiv Kumar, in “giving the sense of duration, of the lapse and accumulation of time” (Kumar 69). When she called Laurence Sterne the “forerunner of the moderns”, she was seeing in him the first writer to rebel against chronological time. For time of consciousness is very much different from time of material world. In the world of things and facts, man is the slave of linear time, while in the world of consciousness and vision he conquers time.

Shiv Kumar, studying the similarities between Bergson's technical treatment of time and Virginia Woolf's, suggests that Bergson's insistence on the complete identification between artist and his subject is an anticipation of the stream of consciousness technique (Kumar 20). By this, the novelist renders reality in its original aspect, as the consciousness perceives it—time not systematised into a chronological sequence but as “a mode of perception” (Kumar 68).

The fundamental difference between Locke's spatial analysis of duration (expounded in his An Essay Concerning Human Understanding) and Bergson's *la dureé* is the same as the difference between Sterne and Virginia Woolf in their treatment of time. Locke's theory of “association of ideas” suggests a process of quantitative assemblage, while Bergson's durational concept considers time present duration as “a ceaseless succession of qualitative changes” (Kumar 70). Whereas *Tristram Shandy* assumes that “in every sound man's head there is a regular succession of ideas of one sort or other, which follow each other in train” (Kumar 70), Mrs Dalloway converts even clock-time into a subjective experience. Apart from the difference in their treatment of time, the essential distinction that Sterne and Woolf draw between the external, linear time and the psychic, subjective time is identical.

Virginia Woolf, then, conceives time basically in two aspects: clock-time which is artificial, quantitative and spatial, and psychic time which is fluid, qualitative and concentric. Thus certain moments get invested in the consciousness with an importance and significance far greater the significance pre-apportioned to it in clock-time. Virginia Woolf's novels proceed from such a premise.

CHAPTER THREE

TREATMENT OF TIME IN VIRGINIA WOOLF'S NOVELS

This I say is the present moment... This is part of the merging monster to whom we are attached...

—Rhoda in Virginia Woolf's The Waves.

As a member of the Bloomsbury Group of intellectuals and artists, Virginia Woolf could not escape the new awareness of reality and of time. G E Moore's Principia Ethica, which was the Bible of the Group, contained suggestions of a reality, an "Absolute Good", which existed outside time and space (Moore 110). E M Forster, another member of Bloomsbury, makes a similar distinction when he says, "there is something else in life besides time, something which may conveniently be called value" (Forster 36). These had their share in shaping Virginia Woolf's concepts of man's relation to time and reality, which, though they do not form a systematized philosophy, have been presented through her novels. The thematic and technical approaches of her novels to time cannot be divorced from each other. While we shall examine the "how" of her novels in terms of time, we

may also relate this technical aspect to the total concept of the time-scheme, the “what” of the novels. John Maynard Keynes, the noted economist and member of the Bloomsbury Group, spoke of how Moore valued “timeless, passionate states of contemplation and communion”, the greatest of which were “certain states of consciousness, which may be roughly described as the pleasures of human intercourse and the enjoyment of beautiful objects” (Keynes 252). Moore was no idealist because he asserted the separate reality of material objects (Rosenbaum 327). To him, consciousness is “diaphanous”, and “transparent”; nevertheless, Moore is, along with James and Bergson, a philosopher of consciousness. In her collection of stories, Monday or Tuesday, Virginia Woolf seems to have been guided by Moore’s views. “Most of the stories in Monday or Tuesday are studies of the way consciousness combines with what it perceives to produce those states of mind that Virginia Woolf felt fiction should be about” (Rosenbaum 323).

Critical appraisal of Virginia Woolf’s works has tended to focus on feminist concerns. Although some commentators have noted that Woolf’s high modernist style lends itself to a number of readings with respect to sense of self and the passage of time, philosophical discussions have generally not played a significant role in Woolf scholarship. There has nevertheless been some critical

acknowledgement of the seriousness with which Virginia Woolf treated the theme of time in some of her novels like Mrs Dalloway and To the Lighthouse. Critics like Shiv K Kumar have noted her concern for time, reality and a sense of interior life-as-lived that is overtly philosophical in its construction.

Virginia Woolf's primary concern as a novelist is the exploration of character. In a paper read at Cambridge in 1924 ("Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown") she said, "I believe that all novels ... deal with character, and that it is to express character that the form of the novel has been evolved" (Collected Essays I 324).

The life of any man or woman, the life of consciousness, is missing in the "materialist" novels of writers who are slaves to convention (Collected Essays II 290). In her critical essays, Virginia Woolf denounced such writers; and she consistently praised the awareness of this real life in some novelists from Sterne to Joyce. What she disliked most in the Edwardian novelists Wells, Bennett and Galsworthy was the "railway-line" narrative which excluded and falsified the psychic life and its experience of time. Her own novels, up to To the Lighthouse, may be seen to evolve through stages of progressive awareness of the various aspects of psychic time.

In Erich Auerbach's influential essay, "The Brown Stocking," Virginia Woolf's distinguishing technical features of stream of consciousness are examined in relation to devices used by many contemporary writers. Auerbach states that terms such as stream of consciousness and interior monologue reflect the "author's attitude toward the reality of the world he represents." (Beja 45) Woolf's uniqueness begins with an "attempt to render the flow and the play of consciousness adrift in the current of changing impressions." Auerbach contends that Woolf's technique is achieved through "[t]he design of a close approach to objective reality by means of numerous subjective impressions received by various individuals (and at various times) is important in the modern technique." Woolf's use of the "multipersonal representation of consciousness" is unique through its combination with "treatment of time." This relation is not new to modern literature; however, narration is not devoted to an external occurrence, rather internal processes. "In Virginia Woolf's case the external events have lost their hegemony, they serve to release and interpret inner events, whereas before her time... inner movements preponderantly function to prepare and motivate significant external happenings." Although there is no temporal relation between external framing and internal impressions, each share a common element. The important aspect to remember regarding the uniqueness of Woolf's representation of

consciousness is that “insignificant external occurrence releases ideas and chains of ideas which cut loose from the present of the external occurrence and range freely through the depths of time” (Beja 45-50).

Virginia Woolf’s technique appears consistent with modern writings in psychology. Bergson explains that the conscious is never in a “state.” Instead, the consciousness is constantly changing due to present impressions integrating with past experiences (Bergson, Time and Free Will 68-71). Woolf’s characters seem to be constantly reminded of the past through their present experiences. For example, the passage, which Auerbach examines in To the Lighthouse, discusses the impression that the worn furniture has on Mrs Ramsay as her eyes fall onto it (See Woolf, To the Lighthouse 26). Therefore, the term stream of consciousness may be too general when describing Woolf’s work.

Woolf’s probing into the human consciousness in To the Lighthouse is not so simplistic that it can be attributed to any particular narrative technique. What really distinguishes her novel is the aesthetic effect of her exploration of the minds of her characters. Only an artist of Woolf’s stature can present the mental worlds of her characters with an unprecedented depth and intensity. By virtue of her depth and

intensity, Woolf creates a novel both with an unconventional “plot”, and an unconventional prose. In fact, the imaginative power of her language tunneling the minds of her characters translates her novel to the level of poetry. Therefore, To the Lighthouse emerges not as a typical prosaic presentation of events. The subtle suggestiveness in the novel has the charisma of poetry. An anonymous critic writing in 1927 sees To the Lighthouse from this perspective:

From the point of view of time, stream of consciousness novels start on a note of dissatisfaction with conventional writings, but end up tiring themselves out and leaning back on conventions. This is perhaps why stream of consciousness novels have not been seen as a serious genre worthy of consideration, in the second half of the twentieth century. Virginia Woolf typically represents this class of writers both in her fervid loyalty to the stream of consciousness form but also in the weariness she seems to feel about extreme experimentation. Just as the sudden spurt of stream of consciousness novels got gradually swallowed up in the current of conventionality, so does Virginia Woolf’s novels too start in conventions, move on to rigorous experimentation, and end up on a note of compromise. Her novels trace this evolution not merely of her own work, but of stream of consciousness novels in general. Time the monster is not tamed; it has

only convinced her that it is no use trying. She seems to give up her struggle in favour of art. Art creates, it sustains, and it endures.

Virginia Woolf's eight novels mark eight stages in her attitude to time. The first two, The Voyage Out and Night and Day, present time as linear in the usual mode. The third, Jacob's Room, marks out states of consciousness that could be called "states of being". Time is a "process" of "becoming", and it does not offer us any "product" in the form of a "being". So the search for real self has to go on. Virginia Woolf's next novel, Mrs Dalloway, is her first serious attempt to find an answer to the challenge of time. Time is the great unifier, but it is also a destroyer. The fifth and perhaps best novel, To the Lighthouse, presents the balanced consciousness conquering time—though not in actuality. Orlando, more a fantasy than a novel, stretches the obsession with time to ridiculous extremes, as though it is only in fantasy that one could get to terms with time. However, in presenting this, time relapses into its spatial— and linear—character. The next novel, The Waves, gives up all pretensions to understand the enigma of time, and tries to take shelter in "moments" of being. The Years shows a relapse into clock-time, almost a surrender. And the last one, Between the Acts, seeks the aid of art in conquering time more in a figurative manner than in actuality.

The Voyage Out and Night and Day -- “railway-line narrative”:

Virginia Woolf’s first novel, The Voyage Out (1915), is conventional. If at all it suggests anything of the mature novelist in her, it is to be found in the emphasis on the mental life of the characters as much as on external actions. Though there are situations here, the novel is primarily one of character. Virginia Woolf’s tendency to isolate her characters and locale is also discernible in her first novel. Rachel Vinrace, an over-inhibited girl of twenty-four, sets upon a voyage out which is as much symbolic as actual; she is initiated into sexual awareness by the Dalloways and her aunt Mrs Ambrose. She falls in love, is engaged, but suddenly dies though not before she has had a mystical realisation of her own self. As J K Johnstone points out, Helen Ambrose’s embroidery depicts in advance certain events in the novel, thus merging the present with the future (Johnstone 325).

However, for all its emphasis on the inner man, the novel does not deprecate the external man. In 1929, in an essay called simply “Phases of Fiction”, Woolf wrote that the novelist should “give that full record of life, not the climax and the crisis but the growth and development of feelings...” (Collected Essays II 99). But her first novel does not choose between the two: while it does attempt to record the development of Rachel’s mind, it also moves towards a well-defined

climax in chronological sequence. Thus in The Voyage Out the clock assumes its traditional role and has no deeper significance than announcing hours and suggesting conventional analogies. Though certain casual references such as, for instance, “the clock still ticking in the midst of universal silence” (357) help to give a sense of the pervasiveness and the authoritative presence of time, the subjective aspect of time is not explored.

Night and Day (1919) continues the traditional method of presenting life chronologically. Quentin Bell in Vol. II of his Virginia Woolf: A Biography points out that Virginia Woolf called this the “railway-line” narrative (Bell 106). Her first novel is a good example of this unidirectional, linear narrative. Katharine Hilbery, granddaughter of a famous poet, meets Ralph Denham who is much poorer, and, though at first misled by circumstances, they at last decide to get married. Once again the clock performs the docile function of announcing hours of transition from one phase of consciousness to another. The clocks are very much a presence, but as in The Voyage Out it is only clock-time that is suggested here. We hear the clock’s “mellow strokes”: “As the last of them died away, there was a firm knocking on her door, and she rose and opened it” (44). Shiv Kumar

rightly says, “the clock does not break in upon an unprepared consciousness, but strikes only at a convenient moment” (Kumar 72).

Jacob’s Room -- “states of being”: Virginia Woolf’s third novel Jacob’s Room (1922) came after a collection of short “sketches” entitled Monday or Tuesday (1921) which first revealed her tendency for experimentation.

In Jacob’s Room Virginia Woolf explicitly recognises the limitations of the clock which divides time into shreds. Clock-time is an arbitrary artificiality superimposed on the essentially indivisible totality of our experience of time. Nature is indifferent to these man-made clock-divisions: “The church clock struck ten. Did the strokes reach the furze bush, or did the thorn tree hear them?” (125) Again: “Motionless and broad-backed the moors received the statement ‘It is fifteen minutes past the hour,’ but made no answer, unless a bramble stirred” (126).

Shiv Kumar observes how the hour of five o’clock is selected in the novel to demonstrate “the arbitrariness of any particular moment singled out of the stream of *la dureé*” (Kumar 74). Life which is essentially dynamic is artificially stilled and frozen; the characters,

“arrested in their life-flow, pause, as it were, for a moment before the camera, and break into movement again” (73). Here a single picture is presented instead of a rapid succession of snapshots on a cinematographic film.

What we are shown, then, is the frozen moment as against the continuum of psychic time. The artificial stillness evokes as much as it counterpoints the essential progression. Paradoxically, the stasis, by its sheer artificiality, vindicates the reality of psychic flux. This antithesis between the arbitrary moment and the real flux is thematically reinforced by the subtle counterpointing, noted by Bernard Blackstone, of movement and stillness throughout the novel (Blackstone 67). At the very outset, Betty sits still, reading, while Archer wanders past calling Jacob; Jacob clammers over rocks; and the waves beat incessantly. To cite yet another of the innumerable examples, at the beginning of Chapter 10 we are shown alternate glimpses of Jacob sitting by the window and Fanny Elmer passing beneath (108).

Whereas Virginia Woolf’s first two novels take the time-sequence for granted and observe the chronological development of plot, Jacob’s Room reduces the story interest to the minimum by recording experience “not in its public or social aspect, but as the

outward manifestations of states of being” (Moody 16). Jacob, born into the ugly, unreal world of the adult, always tries to keep up his “sense of freedom”. He is repulsed by the schematised world of “elderly people” and attracted to the world of nature and things. He flits from place to place, to London, France, Italy, Greece; now almost loving Clara, now having an affair with Florinda; now in close affinity with the world of things and now far away. At last he is killed in war leaving his room in confusion.

Jacob’s room is shown by projecting a series of momentary flashes. We see particular areas of space limited by the range, as it were, of the camera or of a character’s vision, as well as particular portions of time. In Chapter 3, we see the landscape through the eyes of Jacob who is resting in the company of Timmie Durrant:

Now there was a shiver of wind—instantly an edge of the sky; and as Durrant ate cherries he dropped the stunted yellow cherries through the green wedge of leaves, their stalks twinkling as they wriggled in and out, and sometimes one half-bitten cherry would go down red into the green. The meadow was on a level with Jacob’s eyes as he lay back; gilt with buttercups, but the grass did not run like the thin green water of the graveyard grass about to overflow the tombstones, but stood juicy and

thick. Looking up, backwards, he saw the legs of children deep in the grass, and the legs of cows. (34)

Thus, a particular scene is not generally described in full by an all-seeing author perched at some vantage point high above; rather, it is shown to the reader subjectively, through the character's eyes. Just so, we do not get direct from the author a chronological account of incidents or situations; instead, as we partake of a character's consciousness, we move up and down the stream of time, though, as earlier suggested, we do not witness its flow but its artificial stasis at moments. It is as though its flow, arrested by an oar for a split-second, is photographed for us. Like the river on which Timmy and Jacob sail, this stream "too runs past, not at flood, not swiftly, but cloying the oar that dips in it and drops white drops from the blade" (33). We flit from one random moment to another. When Mrs Flanders is sitting on the pier at the Dod's Hill aquarium, a young man observes her skirt: "It changes; drapes her ankles—the nineties; then it amplifies—the seventies; now it's burnished red and stretched above a crinoline—the sixties" (16).

The reader jumps through the decades back and forth, almost ascribing to Mrs Flanders a process of ageing slower than others'.

Indeed, Mr Andrew Floyd who presently proposes to her is eight years younger. Mrs Flanders rejects his proposal and now we leap suddenly across a broad gap of time to a future years away: "But the letter which Mr Floyd found on the table when he got up early next morning ... was such a motherly, respectful letter that he kept it for many years ... when he looked for it the other day he could not find it ... Meeting Jacob in Piccadilly lately, he recognised him after three seconds. But Jacob had grown such a fine young man that Mr Floyd did not like to stop him in the street" (19).

Meanwhile, present time flows on, and is measured by the church clock which strikes the hours and the quarter-hours. The clock, though, is a poor guide. The novelist often hints at the relative value of clock-time. While the luncheon party is waiting for Jacob who "had mistaken his time", we are told mockingly of "a cloud choosing that moment to cross the sun" (31). Even our perceptions which transcend time, our visions of eternity, have to happen at some particular moments in linear time.

Thus we see Jacob, with Timmy, lying in the Scilly Isles, surrounded by the sea which symbolises eternity. Jacob singing,

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee,

sees the sky as another manifestation of eternity: cloudless at midday, “it was like something permanently displayed with the cover off” (49). Even this vision of permanence has to happen at an arbitrary moment, “at midday”. Now Virginia Woolf goes on to hammer home its arbitrariness and insignificance in an almost mock-epic strain:

By six o'clock a breeze blew in off an ice field; and by seven the water was more purple than blue; at half-past seven there was a patch of rough gold-beater's skin round the Scilly Isles, and Durrant's face, as he sat steering, was of the colour of a red lacquer box polished for generations. By nine all the fire and confusion had gone out of the sky, leaving wedges of apple-green and plates of pale yellow; and by ten the lanterns on the boat were making twisted colours upon the waves ... (49)

This dilemma of our inability to escape temporal limitations thus takes on a thematic significance. This dilemma is a novelist's too. For while she presents scene after scene of what we have called “states of being”, she has to impose an overall pattern to her message intelligible. As J K Johnstone puts it, “paradoxically enough, it appears that, in order to escape from the time-sequence, she must first record present time

clearly” (Johnstone 332). Time may be ridiculed, but the novelist cannot help temporality.

Whereas in her first novels Virginia Woolf took chronological sequence for granted, in Jacob’s Room she revolts against it. But, as E M Forster was to declare five years later in Aspects of the Novel, the “story” has to be told in relation to time in order to be intelligible. “But it is never possible for a novelist,” he confesses, “to deny time inside the fabric of his novel: he must cling, however lightly, to the thread of his story, [...] otherwise he becomes unintelligible” (Forster 37). In her subsequent novels, Virginia Woolf tried other methods like space-time montage and symbolism to hold her novels together. But the very fact that they communicate in intelligible terms the essentially incommunicable psychic experience of time makes them conform to the Forsterian compromise. Defy time as she might, Virginia Woolf has to surrender to it; she has to fight the antagonist on his own terms.

Her picture of the non-symmetrical “semi-transparent envelope”, therefore, has in terms of the overall structure to be arranged symmetrically. We seem to see, to quote her perhaps a little out of context, “something girding it about like the firm road of Defoe’s story telling; or we see it shaped and symmetrical with dome and column

complete” Which proves, says Virginia Woolf in her essay “Phases of Fiction”, “that the novel is by its nature doomed to compromise, wedded to mediocrity.” Nonetheless, “the purpose of discovery goes on perpetually” (Collected Essays II 101).

It does, especially in her own case. She does not propose to deal with the ‘exterior life’ bounded in time, but with the life of consciousness. Thematically, Virginia Woolf gives the lie to time; but so far as the outer framework of the ‘story’ is concerned, all she can do is to emphasise its insignificance, never to escape it. Sandra in Jacob’s Room hears the clock tick, and “time accumulating”. If we may take this as the opposition of spatial time against the perception of psychic time, her desperate question is an echo of the author’s: “What for? What for?” (153)

The room is an image central to the novel, as its title suggests. In fact, critics have pointed out that Jacob’s ‘room’ is “more vividly realised than Jacob” (Brewster 106). J K Johnstone says that “this is a serious weakness in the novel: For its centre, the character who might unite all the various scenes is—not there.” (Johnstone 334). For it is not only a particular character whose actions in the temporal world are explored here, but the abstract concept of human personality in its relation to

time. And as an image the room symbolises human consciousness in its temporal context, “selfhood formed in time” as John Graham calls it (Graham 29). It is one’s private world which is limited spatially and temporally, and in his rebellion against the world of elderly people, against the schematised society, Jacob’s only refuge is his own room, or rather his many rooms in Cambridge, London, Patras.

S P Rosenbaum, studying the direct relevance of G E Moore’s philosophy of dualistic realism—asserting the non-material reality of consciousness as against materialists and asserting the separate reality of material objects as against idealists—to Virginia Woolf’s aesthetics, observes that while Jacob’s room represents his immediate environment, the objects of his perception, it is also “symbolic of his consciousness itself.” “Jacob’s rooms are symbols of the acts and the objects, the form and the content, of consciousness” (Rosenbaum 329). The rooms may be emptied of Jacob’s person, but the objects like the boots remain.

Mrs Dalloway--“fear no more...” : **Mrs Dalloway** (1925), at first titled **The Hours**, carries Virginia Woolf’s experimentation with time a step further. While **Jacob’s Room**, innovative as it was in its method, nevertheless observed the usual time-span of a novel, this one covers

the passage of a single day, as Joyce's Ulysses had done three years earlier. The time-scheme of the novel's exterior structure may be analysed thus: On a Wednesday morning in June, Mrs Clarissa Dalloway leaves her house to buy flowers for her party. At eleven o'clock she is in the street, joining all others looking up at an aeroplane advertising toffees; at half-past eleven Peter Walsh leaves Clarissa's house; at a quarter to twelve he passes Septimus; at twelve Clarissa lays her dress on the bed, and Septimus reaches Sir William Bradshaw's clinic; at half-past one Richard Dalloway attends Lady Bruton's lunch party in Brook Street; at three Mrs Dalloway reads Mrs Marsham's letter, and at half-past three sees the old lady across her window; at six Septimus Smith commits suicide.

Jacob's Room, we saw, tried to show what consciousness-time is not rather than what it is; thus it ended up as a depiction of "states of being" which do not form Virginia Woolf's final word about the nature of consciousness. In Mrs Dalloway she is trying to present her concept of psychic time: rather than presenting "states of being", it shows the "process of becoming", the "dynamic continuity" (Kumar 76). The entire novel, not divided into chapters, is a rendering of consciousness in its perpetual flux.

Mrs Dalloway begins where Jacob's Room left off, in the sense that it tries at first to reiterate the essential difference between clock-time and mind-time. The former has us at its command while psychic time is subject to consciousness. Big Ben, when it strikes, sounds like an inscrutable judge passing an irrevocable judgment: "There! Out it boomed. First a warning, musical; then the hour, irrevocable" (6). On the other hand, a little later, Clarissa muses over her relations with Peter Walsh in the past: "For they might be parted for hundreds of years, she and Porter ... some days, some sights bringing him back to her calmly, without the old bitterness" (9).

The time-scheme that we noted earlier is limited to the structure of the novel—the clocks slicing the day into bits are part of the external phenomena. The inner time yields to no such arbitrary divisions. In fact, here Virginia Woolf converts clock-time into a subjective experience. Describing the chimes of the Big Ben as "leaden circles" dissolving in the air, she presents how Peter Walsh's consciousness assimilates them: "It is half-past eleven, she says, and the sound of St Margaret's glides into the recesses of the heart and buries itself in ring after ring of sound, like something alive which wants to confide itself, to disperse itself, to be, with a tremor of delight, at rest—like Clarissa herself, thought Peter Walsh, coming downstairs on the stroke of the

hour” (56). S P Rosenbaum, while disputing the point that time here can be dichotomised into clock-time and duration, also points out that the novel presents time “as something that is experienced by consciousness, something that is outside themselves and that they share in the perception of” (Rosenbaum 337). Time here is something that is at once outside the consciousness and conditioned by it. The interval between eleven and half-past eleven is richer in intensity, unfolding the many past years of Clarissa at Bourton, than the longer interval between half-past three and six. Only external time can be counted and calculated.

Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Smith who is writing an “Ode to Time” uphold the superiority of psychic time. Septimus lives as much in the past as in the present, through his recollections of his dead friend Evans. He is not attached to the present; and since inner time is an intensely individual perception he is an “outcast” from society and from human nature in general. Being “quite alone, condemned, deserted, as those who are about to die are alone, there was a luxury in it, an isolation full of sublimity; a freedom which the attached can never know” (103). When Rezia once asks him the time, “I will tell you the time,” said Septimus, very drowsily, smiling mysteriously at the dead man in the grey suit” (79).

Smith's suicide itself is a defiance of the tyranny of clock-time as represented by Sir William Bradshaw. Sir William is a clock because he is the apostle of proportion, and because he tries to regulate life's endless stream. In a fit of intense dislike for Sir William, Rezia rages at his kind:

Shredding and slicing, dividing and subdividing, the clocks of Harley Street nibbled at the June day, counselled submission, upheld authority, and pointed out in chorus the supreme advantages of a sense of proportion, until the mound of time was so far diminished that a commercial clock, suspended above a shop in Oxford Street, announced, genially and fraternally, as if it were a pleasure to Messrs Rigby and Lowndes to give the information gratis, that it was half-past one (113).

Sir William, Dr Holmes and the clocks of Harley Street uphold the tyranny of external time. The situation leading to Smith's suicide is the obvious creation of Dr Holmes, while the suicide ~~itself is~~ conceived as Smith's triumph. But Dr Holmes who cannot understand Smith's vision sees his act as cowardice; and, himself the cause of it, he cannot know

it because he is unsympathetic and is blinded by his narrow time-sense: “who could have foretold it?” he asks (165).

Smith’s mystical vision of some part of us that might survive time is shared by Clarissa also. Peter Walsh observes that “she felt herself everywhere”, that she has a “transcendental theory” that the unseen part of us might survive, though our bodies, “our apparitions, the part of us which appears, are so momentary compared with the other” (168-9).

Clarissa feels herself part of Smith in his defiance (204). Now she has a moment of happiness, and then: “The clock began striking. The young man had killed himself; but she did not pity him; with the clock striking the hour, one, two, three, she did not pity him, with all this going on”. (205)

Sir William Bradshaw and Dr Holmes are devotees of the clocks which divide and subdivide, while Mrs Dalloway and Septimus Smith know that they only touch the surface of our existence in time, the waves on the surface of the sea. The sense of proportion and the divisive temperament are characteristics of clock-time, and Smith and Clarissa recognise their inferior role in our life. The only occasion in the novel when Smith speaks “as he used to do” is when he says about the hat his

wife has made: "It's too small for Mrs Peters" (159), that is, when he shows a sense of proportion. Sir William divides men into sane and insane with his yardstick of proportion. A third characteristic these antagonists have in common with clock-time is the authority they arbitrarily exercise over the others. In the crucial situation leading to his death, Septimus sees "Holmes and Bradshaw, men who ... talked of proportion; who differed in their verdicts (for Holmes said one thing, Bradshaw another) yet judges they were; who mixed the vision and the sideboard; saw nothing clear, yet ruled, yet inflicted" (164).

Clock-time, then, divides; but at the same time, by its sheer authority and tyranny, it imposes a unity, a hierarchical order based on proportion, so that only those people are visibly united who meet in time as much as in space, as people who experience a common feeling, who together look at a pageant. It is true that the people of London get united in viewing the royal car or the aeroplane. The traffic, in the novel, may thus symbolise the group of persons united in spatial time. Peter Walsh, stepping out of Clarissa's room, is "overwhelmed by the traffic and the sound of all the clocks striking" (54). It is only during the thirty seconds when the car stops, when "all heads were inclined the same way" (21), that Clarissa and Septimus may be said to come close in spatial terms at all. Time, symbolised by the passing car, unites

them: “Everyone looked at the motor car. Septimus looked. Boys on bicycles sprang off. Traffic accumulated. And there the motor car stood, [...] and this gradual drawing together of everything to one centre before his eyes, as if some horror had come almost to the surface and was about to burst into flames, terrified him” (18). The motorcar, like the snail in the short story “Kew Gardens”, represents linear time. Carrying “the voice of authority”, it sets the traffic to a standstill, and gives out the scorching awareness of persons imprisoned by it: “Everything had come to a standstill ... The sun became extraordinarily hot because the motorcar had stopped outside Mulberry’s shop window” (17).

The personage inside the car is mysterious but certainly great. It may be the consciousness which now lives in time but because of its androgynous nature (“Even the sex was in dispute” 19) can transcend it. The person is at once an individual bounded in time and the institution of monarchy that is comparatively more enduring. It is “the majesty of England, ... the enduring symbol of the state which will be known to curious antiquaries, sifting the ruins of time, when London is a grass-grown path and all those hurrying along the pavement this Wednesday morning are but bones...” (19).

Standing close to the car, meanwhile, Septimus Waaren Smith is suddenly apprehensive: "The world has raised its whip; where will it descend?" (17) The world of matter, of time, typified by Holmes and Bradshaw, strikes within hours, and Smith retaliates by escaping from its clutches. His body is carried in an ambulance. To the materialists who care for his body he has left it. Smith who had been stranded, "unable to pass," earlier in the presence of the car, now races through the streets. He passes from life to death, from time beyond time; the ambulance, in terms of clock-time, is the moment of transition. Peter Walsh is touched by its sight for it is "a moment in which things came together; this ambulance; and life and death" (168).

Blackstone points out that the present experience mingles with the past, especially in Clarissa's mind (Blackstone 93). The past is interwoven with present actualities, so that past and present merge into a simultaneous experience. The past exists not only in its present consequences and relations. As against clock-time progressing irrevocably, consciousness can revoke the past. The two principal characters constantly relive the past. In the case of Clarissa who tries to find an enduring quality in psychic time, the past is often associated with a living character, Peter; Peter, Clarissa's one-time lover, also shares her past. To Septimus who tries to escape time altogether, the

past is often connected with the dead Evans. He is afraid of death but at the same time the more fascinated by it. When he is musing about the beauty of a tree, his wife says, "It's time"; and then: "The word 'time' split its husk", and from his lips words fall in an "immortal ode to Time". He sees Evans approaching and asks him away but he comes, giving him an "astonishing revelation" (78-9).

Thus, to sum up, Mrs Dalloway is a step forward in the treatment of time. Jacob's Room showed what psychic time is not; Mrs Dalloway tries to define it in positive terms, by showing what it is. It is an attempt toward presenting consciousness and its experience of time. As against the finiteness of time it tries to find immortality in consciousness and its perceptions.

Unlike clock-time which is quantitative, psychic time is qualitative: first, it is not sequential as it is in clock-time ("First one thing and then another" 160) and cannot be broken into past, present and future; it is not linear but concentric and simultaneous. Secondly, it does not exercise an arbitrary authority to impose order on life and experiences as clock-time does. Whatever order one attains in psychic time is not imposed from outside but elicited by a mystical vision from the inside, not demanded but commanded.

Besides being qualitative, psychic time is highly individualistic and almost incommunicable. Clarissa and Septimus who live in it are either of them lonely. Again, life of body may be limited and circumscribed in time, but life of consciousness refers beyond matter and transcends temporal limitations. Septimus survives as part of Clarissa herself. It is thus that the Shakespearian refrain “Fear no more the heat o’ the sun” becomes a central statement of the novel—the sun, a temporal agent, destroys only the body; consciousness endures much longer.

An important part of our experience of time, “the moment”, recurs throughout the novel as a motif. We have already stated that certain moments are much more important to the individual than others. At the superficial level, the moment belongs to external time—in fact it is the point at which the straight line of linear time intersects the constantly shifting circumference of psychic time. While it is the consciousness that gives it qualitative significance and makes it real, it bears the stamp of apparent actuality unlike a more sustained experience of psychic time. Thus Clarissa loves “life; London; this moment of June” (6). The moment happens in linear time but it is enriched by something beyond, something more real: “it was the moment between six and seven when every flower...glows...; every flower seems to burn by itself” (16). Except for this, the moment is exclusively a creation of the

consciousness. In it one experiences in an intensified form all the characteristics of psychic time. First, it is invested with a qualitative significance: Peter Walsh, at the stroke of half-past eleven, seeing Clarissa, has an “extraordinarily clear, yet puzzling, recollection of her, as if this bell had come into the room years ago, where they set at some moment of great intimacy, and had gone from one to the other, and had left, like a bee with honey, laden with the moment” (56). Again, in the moment, past, present and future meet. (Peter Walsh immediately sees his future “rolled down to him” 56). It is man’s shelter from the relentless march towards death; Clarissa, afraid of old age, finds solace in the moment: “She was not old yet. She had just broken into her fifty-second year. Months and months of it were still untouched. June, July, August: each still remained almost whole, and, as if to catch the falling drop, Clarissa...plunged into the very heart of the moment, transfixed it, there” (41-2). The problem thus is how to perpetuate the moment—and we find Virginia Woolf concerned with it in To the Lighthouse. Another problem with the moment, as the essence of psychic time, is that it is too personal to unite people. Clarissa reflects “how moments like these are buds on the tree of life, flowers of darkness they are, she thought (as if some lovely rose had blossomed for her eyes only)” (33). Lastly, like psychic time, the moment can have a transcendental value. At the moment of her identification with the dead Septimus, Clarissa

has such a moment of incredible happiness because, bounded as she is in time, she has had a union with the timeless, with Septimus who is dead. (See for instance Mrs Dalloway 205). The moment is the quintessence of one's experience of time. It is the eddy one lingers at in the stream of one's consciousness.

To the Lighthouse--"life stand still here": We have noted that in contrast to clock-time psychic time has two demerits—it cannot be long sustained; and it cannot unite people. In To the Lighthouse (1927), Virginia Woolf seems to be concerned with focusing on the moment, the eddy in the stream, in close-up and examining how it can be made permanent, "to crystallize and transfix the moment" (5).

Structurally the novel is the reverse of Mrs Dalloway. While the earlier novel expanded a day into a lifetime, To the Lighthouse contracts ten years into the fabric of a day, for, though the second part 'Time Passes' separates 'The Window' and 'The Lighthouse' by ten years, the third part continues the essential action of the first. Part I depicts an evening when James the son wants to go to the lighthouse the next day. The 'action' is taken up in a morning after ten years which period is treated as though it were one night. The second part begins when the characters go to bed, and ends with the word "Awake". During these ten years,

“The long night seemed to have set in.” The passage of years is then indicated by such statements as “But what after all is one night? [...] Night succeeds to night” (145) and by the descriptions of the many nights in the changing seasons. The pageant of seasons gives this section an added dimension of “time in relation to eternity, the short span of mortal lives contrasted with the recurring seasons and the enduring world” (Bennett 105).

Time destroys the house; we are told parenthetically of the death of some characters including Mrs Ramsay. When the third part begins the remaining characters are preparing for the expedition to the lighthouse. The unity of time that Mrs Dalloway observed is here deliberately broken.

Johnstone notes how the flow of time is measured in the first and third parts not by clocks as in Mrs Dalloway but by the natural events of a day—Mrs Ramsay’s trip to and from the town, her knitting which she tries to finish before night, dinner, bedtime, the movement of the boat from the bay to the lighthouse, and so on.

Seen plainly as the contrast between clock-time and psychic time, the novel is again the reiteration of the significance of the latter. The life of

consciousness being more important than the physical life, the middle part which treats external time covering ten years is given far less space in the novel than the other two which, in terms of clock-time, cover only parts of two days. Analysing the section in Part I where Mrs Ramsay measures the brown stocking against her son's leg, Eric Auerbach (in his useful analysis "Mimesis: the Representation of Reality in Western Literature", 1946, reprinted in Beja) points to the disparity between "the brief span of time occupied by the exterior event and the dreamlike wealth of a process of consciousness which traverses a whole subjective universe" (Beja 120).

Among the characters, Mr and Mrs Ramsay most typically represent the two views of time, reflected in their attitudes to the proposed visit to the lighthouse. Mr Ramsay is the scientist who needs logical conviction to accept anything: Mrs Ramsay who always exaggerates and tells pleasant lies annoys him by her sheer irrationality. Her instinct is ultimately proved as definitely better than Mr Ramsay's truthfulness. He believes in facts; she depends on vision. Thus, when the expedition is proposed, Mrs Ramsay assures James that they could go the next morning. Mr Ramsay, seeing "the barometer falling and the wind due west" (38), is certain that it would rain. To him, time is a linear process and the future an untravelled region which can be predicted but not

visualised. To Mrs Ramsay, on the other hand, external time is a limited region which exists in space—past, present and future. The expedition exists in time, and its realisation is only a question of reaching the point in time. The novel opens with her assurance to James that they could go to the lighthouse. “To her son those words conveyed an extraordinary joy, as if it were settled the expedition were bound to take place” (5). A little later, she adds as if in explanation to the rationalists: “And even if it isn’t fine tomorrow, ... it will be another day” (31).

To people like Mrs Ramsay, then, life is not a “railway-line” but a living organism: “life, far from being made up of little separate incidents which one lived one by one, became curled and whole like a wave which bore one up with it and threw one down with it, there, with a dash on the beach” (55). Time is not divisible into an irrevocable past and an unpredictable future. In the course of Lily’s painting, Mrs Ramsay excuses herself to be alone upstairs for a moment, and has a vision of stability and order; then, “it seemed always to have been, only was shown now, and so being shown struck everything into stability. They would, she thought, however long they lived, come back to this night; this moon, this wind, this house, and to her too” (130). And they do: Lily and Mrs Ramsay come back later in their moments of vision.

Mrs Dalloway moved up and down in time between past and present. To the Lighthouse shows what is to come is very much present and shapes the present, and how what is past can be recovered later. The first part is the present which includes in it the future: the voyage to the lighthouse and Lily Briscoe's painting are already fated to be consummated by the end of the part. Mrs Ramsay who predicted fair weather has, in spite of the falling barometer, already begun to feel triumphant. The consummation is achieved; it only needs to be realised at a distance in time. Mrs Ramsay's own vision of stability comes to her from this distance, for at the end of Section 17 of the first part she sees the day as "already the past" (128). It is the actual distancing that is performed by the middle part. The part begins with a statement of this necessity of distancing for objective perception. Mr Bankes says, "Well, we must wait for the future to show", and Andrew agrees, "It's almost too dark to see" (143). When the third part begins, Lily finds herself ready to realise her vision, having "come back" after all these years: "She had come late last night when it was all mysterious, dark. Now she was awake, at her old place at the breakfast table, but alone" (165). Again it is the present, in which the impressions of the first part are kept remote in time but also recovered. Lily sees Mrs Ramsay sitting in the chair; she gets her vision and Mr Ramsay, James and Cam reach the lighthouse. As Bernard Blackstone suggests, time moves in

this part in contrary directions from the present: Mr Ramsay sails into the future, to the lighthouse; Lily's mind travels back into the past until Mrs Ramsay is recreated" (Blackstone Virginia Woolf: A Commentary 101). It is the triumph of Mrs Ramsay and her integrated consciousness which commands "Life stand still here" and shows order in chaos, stability in "this eternal passing and flowing" (183). Personality outlives time through things (like the lighthouse) and through others.

The lighthouse flashing across the waves seems to represent the synthesis of time and eternity. Joan Bennett identifies the three movements of the novel with the two strokes of the lighthouse interrupted by a period of darkness. (Bennett 103-4.) The first movement, then, broadly covers the impressions of consciousness in present time; the second shows them subjected to the ravages of time; and the third depicts how some moments survive time and "partake of eternity". Noting her own self, the "wedge of darkness" which attains this eternity, Mrs Ramsay meets "that stroke of the lighthouse, the long steady stroke, the last of the three which was her stroke" (73).

In Mrs Dalloway Virginia Woolf explored the possibilities of "the moment". The two main drawbacks of the moment were its fleeting nature and its personal nature. In To the Lighthouse she examines how

to overcome the first problem: how “any turn in the wheel of sensation has the power to crystallise and transfix the moment upon which its gloom or radiance rests” (5). For though such moments are many, they are not long sustained. They are but “little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck unexpectedly in the dark” (183).

Only two characters succeed in perpetuating the moment—Mrs Ramsay and the painter Lily. Both are creative personalities who can be outside and within the moment at will. Mrs Ramsay “had a sense of being past everything, through everything, out of everything, ... as if there was an eddy—there—and one could be in it, or one could be out of it, and she was out of it” (96). Thus, in order to perpetuate the moment which is the meeting point of external and psychic time, an enrichment of the opportune moment, it has to be a subjective experience and an objective perception. The person who is sensitive enough to assimilate its impressions, and detached enough to observe the order inherent in the many impressions, can stabilise the moment when it comes. Only a well-integrated, androgynous personality can possess this ability to subjectively experience and objectively create. Mrs Ramsay brings together all the members around the table and gets the delicacy served at the “precise moment”. Observing from the outside, she feels the unity by which she has enriched the moment rising out of the group,

partaking of eternity. “Of such moments, she thought, the thing is made that remains for ever after. This would remain” (121).

The moment of unity does remain, and is recaptured by Lily ten years later. In the spiritual presence of Mrs Ramsay who “brought together”, she dips into the moment, long past, of union with Charles Tansley, the “moment of friendship and living—which survived, after all these years, complete” (182). This moment inspires her to learn how Mrs Ramsay made of the moment “something permanent”; it is a revelation. “In the midst of chaos there was shape; this eternal passing and fleeting... was struck into stability” (183).

Some moments can endure; some persons can perpetuate them. But they cannot unite people. An object of common perception, like the plate of fruits that Carmichael and Mrs Ramsay look at, can join them. But moments of vision are not a common experience but intensely personal; nor are they mere objects of perception but perception itself, a subjective experience. Indeed, in this sense life itself is incommunicable: Mrs Ramsay looks at her own life, “a little strip of time”, which is “something real, something private, which she shared neither with her children nor with her husband” (69); her self is “a wedge-shaped core of darkness, something invisible to others” (72).

She can only perpetuate the moment in objects of perception like the lighthouse, and hope that it will be recovered later. And she does not hope in vain.

Orlando-- through the telescope of space : Orlando (1928) is an interesting if shallow parody of the dominant methods and themes of Virginia Woolf. It is a caricature of biography and her theory of androgyny. Similarly, she explores the extreme possibilities of linear time, stretching man's life-span to cover a few centuries, fusing biography and history into one. The changing facets of English history and English way of life are recreated through the metamorphoses of a single individual. In the sixteenth century, the hero-heroine is sixteen years old. He is masculine, poetic and violent in the Elizabethan age, pensive and morbid in early seventeenth century; presides at literary tea-parties in Augustan age; blushes and swoons in the sentimental Victorian age (Blackstone 131).

The transition from one age to another is marked by direct statements and by Orlando's ageing coupled at times with descriptions of climatic changes. These transitions are sudden rather than gradual. For instance, in his youth, "with the suddenness and severity that then marked the English climate, came the Great Frost" (23). Then he meets Sasha and

falls in love with her, deserting Lady Euphrosyne: “For as he looked the thickness of his blood melted” and as spring breaks over winter his manhood wakes (28). But this, he soon discovers, is an illusion for the Frost persists and at length, as the Frost thaws, Sasha leaves him and reality strikes him in the form of raindrops (41-2).

The advancement of Orlando’s life in time is thus framed within spatial phenomena, as the wind is trapped in Orlando’s large house, “blowing this way, blowing that way, winter and summer” (9). Indeed, time itself is quite often represented in spatial terms. Orlando’s house, we are told, has three hundred and sixty-five bedrooms and fifty-two staircases, an obvious analogy with the numbers of days and weeks in a year. One of the themes of the novel is the relation of time to human personality. “Time has no simple effect upon the mind of man. The mind of man, moreover, works with equal strangeness upon the body of time”. (Orlando 69). This theme of time-personality relationship is borne out by the symbolic use of the house whose rooms represent the different selves of man at different times: “For if there are (at a venture) seventy-six different times all ticking in the mind at once, how many people are there not... all having lodgment at one time or another in the human spirit?” (218) Orlando is seeking the true self which is “the compact of all the selves” up to the present. It is only by searching

throughout the past that Orlando can find out this wild goose, the true self, and the novel is at one level an account of this search.

This voyage into the past is symbolised by a journey through a gallery—another spatial representation of time: “So she sat at the end of the gallery [...] in Queen Elizabeth’s armchair. The gallery stretched far away to a point where the light almost failed. It was a tunnel bored deep into the past” (225). Orlando finds her true self at last, having sought it in relation to undivided, integrated time. She visits the chapel where she had been married and would be buried; the room where she had stayed as Ambassador, which “shone like a shell that has lain at the bottom of the sea for centuries” (224). The house, she realises, “belonged to this time now”. Getting back to the present, she is welcomed by the wild goose, her true self.

Orlando reaches the present through a “ferny path” leading higher to the oak tree on top of a hill. The oak tree to which Orlando writes an ode is another spatial symbol of time. This oak which is “so high indeed that nineteen English counties could be seen beneath” (12) is the twentieth century, the present which grows out of the past. Sitting under it, Orlando sees his whole past which “rushed into the falling second, swelled it a dozen times its natural size” (70).

That, then, is what the novel does with the spatial clock-time; a short span of time can be inflated by our consciousness, as the earlier novels showed. Time gets stretched and contracted by perception. “An hour, once it lodges in the queer element of the human spirit, may be stretched to fifty or a hundred times its clock-length; on the other hand, an hour may be accurately represented on the time-piece of the mind by one second” (Orlando 69). In a passage quoted by A A Mendilow, Sterne said, “Glasses can make an inch seem a mile. I leave it to the future ages to invent a method for making a minute seem a year” (Mendilow 96). Sterne was here anticipating writers like Virginia Woolf. Only, this possibility is carried to the extreme of actuality in Orlando. “This extraordinary discrepancy between time on the clock and time in the mind” (69) is once again a major concern of the novelist.

Indeed, many of the motifs of earlier novels can be found here, too, if at times in a mocking vein. Orlando is an exaggerated restatement of those motifs, except that it extends the scope of Virginia Woolf’s experiments beyond the individual and the society, to point to the historical heritage of a man through the centuries. In the words of A A Mendilow, it is “the phylogenetic time” incorporating itself into “the ontogenetic time as our ancestors are parts of ourselves” (Kumar 83).

The Waves-- “moments of being”: Though Orlando, being a “biography”, allowed the intervention of the author, The Waves (1931) marks the complete annihilation of the author except in the interludes. It develops through the minds of six characters from childhood to middle age. The most lyrical of Virginia Woolf’s novels, it is also the most complex, and each of the six characters is drawn with a subtlety which often defies analysis.

The novel, showing the development of the characters, is framed by interludes which mark the transition from one stage to another. These italicised interludes are direct descriptions of the diurnal progression of the sun; in the background are the incessant roar of the sea, the waves in perpetual motion, and the songs and silences of the birds. Each stage in the lives of the characters’ lives corresponds to each of the nine progressive phases of the sun. When the novel opens, the sun is just rising, and the characters are in their infancy. It ends with the sun having sunk, and Bernard, who is the only character “present” in the last section, challenging the approaching Death, rounded off by the italicised words, “*The waves broke on the shore*”. Here, as J K Johnstone says, “the day becomes easily and naturally a lifetime, the lifetime becomes eternity”. The interludes merge the characters in “the vast and eternal sea of reality” (Johnstone 357).

Each character is an individual, and a very complex one. It is difficult to define his response to life, to draw “circles of chalk between his feet”. In fact, by projecting time on the two levels of the normal life-span and a day, Virginia Woolf tries to suggest how language fails to convey the intricacies of the human personality at any particular stage. For every moment gives another shake to the kaleidoscope of our experiences. Bernard realises this: “it is not age; it is that a drop has fallen; another drop. Time has given the arrangement another shake... Thus in a moment, in a drawing room, our life adjusts itself to the majestic march of day across the sky” (233). As the sun reveals a different pattern of the waves at every stage, the characters’ response to their temporal existence evolves through many intricate interactions. Bernard the phrasemaker, who is intensely conscious of the private and public parts of his self, wavers between the two manifestations of time: “but suddenly one hears a clock tick. We who had been immersed in this world became aware of another” (235). His is a progression toward the ultimate recognition of psychic time, of ‘the moment’, which endures as against clock-time which is “tapering to a point” (158). His attempt to communicate the moment proves futile, and he is tired of phrases which falsify it: “There is always a deep below it... a rushing stream of broken dreams, nursery rhymes, street cries, half-finished sentences and sights...” (219). He cannot make

much out of the spatial dimension of time, of “the light of stars falling...on my hand after travelling for millions upon millions of years” (230). At last, finding something indestructible in the moments of being, the waves of psychic time, “the incessant rise and fall and fall and rise again,” he defies death itself.

To Neville, who lives by more clock-time, death is the end. When Percival dies, he feels himself severed from his past. Bernard later recollects that “from the myriads of mankind and all time past he had chosen one person, one moment in particular” (p. 235). He lives solely in the present, and is worried that “we grow old”. Against this he tries to find refuge in personal relations: “let us abolish the ticking of time’s clock with one blow. Come closer” (155).

Rhoda, too, is attached to the present, the “here and now”, the fleeting moment: “This I say is the present moment... This is part of the merging monster to whom we are attached” (55). She cannot see life in its totality but only as separate instants. She says, “I do not know how to run minute to minute and hour to hour” (111). Try as she might to escape from the present, she cannot forget her roots: “these moments of departure start always in your presence, from...here and now” (119). But she manages to escape through the present itself, in the moments of

intense sensations, which “blow so vast a bubble that the sun might set and rise in it and we might take the blue of midday and the black of midnight and be cast off and escape from here and now” (192). In the one drop of the moment she tries to find the vast sea of all time.

Jinny who is given to sensuality, and Susan the perfect housewife have a much too ordinary attitude to time. Jinny loves to enjoy herself through the senses. For her, time is a vast cellar of self-indulgence: “Days and days are to come; winter days, summer days; we have scarcely broken into our hoard” (121). She is the extreme pragmatist, trying to enrich by bodily pleasures every second of her life. “For she still sought the moment. Without illusions, hard and clear as crystal, she rode at the day with her breast bared” (237). Susan who has accepted a life of complete domesticity sees time as a cycle of birth and death, of winter and summer. And she cannot detach it from her house. Crooning her baby to sleep she muses, “whether it is summer, whether it is winter, I no longer know by the moor grass, and the heath flower; only by the steam on the window-pane, or the frost on the window-pane” (147).

Louis is the individual struggling against the society and its demands upon one’s true, private self. As an individual, he feels

himself part of a common heritage, “the eternal procession” through “infinite space” and “the abyss of time”. “Every day I unbury—I dig up. I find relics of myself in the sand that women made thousands of years ago, when I heard songs by the Nile and the chained beast stamping” (109). Every moment’s impressions have to be assimilated and a total design found. One should “realise the meeting-place of past and present” (56), “nail these impressions” and find one’s identity in relation to historical continuity (145), and must “weave together” (173). But social life limits our visions by chaining us down to the clock. “This is life: Mr Prentice at four; Mr Eyres at four-thirty” (144).

The image of the chained beast stamping seems at one level to suggest the individual in perennial Promethean struggle against the delimiting society. At another, it could be seen as time itself, bound in a spatial frame.

The Waves records the impressions of many moments. There are also moments of extraordinary intensity. The characters who have individually experienced ‘the moments’ participate in the two dinners of reunion (Johnstone 357). In To the Lighthouse the moment could be perpetuated but could not integrate people; here, inversely, it unites people but is not sustained. Bernard tries to find a common bond in

“the moments of being together” as Rhoda calls them, in the annihilation of individual identity: “The winds, the rush of wheels became the roar of time... We were extinguished for a moment... Past time, past history, we went. For me this lasts but one second” (230). The moment of unity is too short-lived. “The moment was all; the moment was enough. And then Melville, Jinny, Susan and I, as a wave breaks, broke asunder, surrendered” (239). At last it is in silence and solitude, going back to “find the particular coat that belongs to me” (255) that Bernard is able to challenge Death.

Unlike Mrs Dalloway and To the Lighthouse where the characters moved up and down in time, it is the moment-to-moment life in the present that is shown in The Waves. Even Louis who is aware of historical continuity always keeps his eyes open, and hears the beast stamping. In To the Lighthouse we heard the roar of the sea of all time in the background; here we only listen to the individual waves breaking on the shore.

The Years: the clocks remade: The Years (1937) is a regression to the traditional form. Though Virginia Woolf wanted to combine the factual with the visionary, the traditional Night and Day with the original The Waves (in fact she says as much in A Writer's Diary 197), the attempt

is a failure. The Years is the chronicle of a family and does not go deeper. As far as Virginia Woolf's treatment of time is concerned, this novel has a chronological narrative, and the characters live in clock-time. As Shiv Kumar points out, only Eleanor apparently acquires a certain stature in time, and that through a mere accumulation of years (Kumar Bergson and the Stream of Consciousness Novel 85).

The Years is the chronicle of a typical Victorian family, the Pargiters, from 1880 to the "Present Day", 1937, through three generations. But by the very arbitrariness of the choice of the years and the seasons, Virginia Woolf seems to emphasise the un-authenticity of clock-time for clocks are "irregular". The clocks are not assimilated into the total experience of consciousness and its 'duration' but fulfil their ordinary role. Nevertheless, like Rose in the novel, Virginia Woolf is "still conscious of the two worlds; one flowing in wild sweeps overhead, the other tip-tapping circumscribed upon the pavement" (93). However she might dote on the world sweeping above, she has to look at it from the circumscribed ground: like Kitty she seems to be overcome by a "sense of the passage of time" (149). Perhaps because of her subject matter, the time sequence from which Virginia Woolf tried to escape is "the *raison d'être* of The Years" (Johnstone 368).

Temporal movements are equated with movements in space in such symbols as the tunnel, the train and the stairs. For instance, going upstairs, Mrs Chinnery is in the “mysterious upper chamber of extreme old age” (169). Each year in the novel, Johnstone points out, is introduced by a passage giving us spatial impressions of the English countryside and of London, with the background of the rain, the smoke, moonlight, wind, snow or mist (Johnstone 368).

Time in relation to personality is once again a predominant concern. The clock divides time; the past becomes pinned down to the eighteenth century (The Years 158). Things being “irrecoverable” as Eleanor feels, the past can only superimpose itself over the present and not merge into it (Eleanor’s past “rising above her present”, The Years 135). Clock-time also divides personality: Eleanor feels herself as two different persons and “that she was living at two different times at the same moment” (135).

The novel only restores what has already been explored about ‘the moment’ – how to make it a common experience and how to make it permanent. Eleanor wishes for another life, “here and now... with living people” because she knows this life is “too short, too broken” (343). She wants “to enclose the present moment; to make it stay; to fill it

fuller and fuller, with the past, the present and the future..." (344). In fact the questions "what is this moment; what are we?" remain unanswered to the very end of the novel. In her experiments with time, Virginia Woolf's The Years is a step backward, a reconsideration, the statement of a doubt. It is a caution against the summary neglect of clock-time.

Between the Acts--time versus art: Like Mrs Dalloway, To the Lighthouse and The Waves, which were structurally contained within one day, Virginia Woolf's last novel, Between the Acts (1941) also is unified within the time sequence of a day. It begins on a summer's night and ends when it is midnight once again. The 'action' takes place in the present, and is told mostly by the author who reappeared in The Years. The present is the most dominant aspect of time explored in Between the Acts where the "cheap clock" ticks and the second hand jerks on (150).

This "jerking" movement is at times reproduced by a technique of momentary flashes with alternating change of scene. Among the audience anticipating the pageant, Mrs Manresa impatiently asks, "Tell me, what's it to be?" and hears laughter from among the bushes. Immediately the focus shifts to Miss La Trobe the producer and the

actors among the bushes, laughing while they get ready. We get a glimpse of their activities, and as their laughter dies away we are taken back to Mrs Manresa and others.

While this technique and the unity of time contribute to the structural unity of the novel, it is also achieved by projecting certain events into the future so as to give the events an apparent inevitability. This technique of prefiguration was first used through the embroidery in The Voyage Out. Here the effect is achieved once by the change of tense. Isabella is anticipating the conversation between Mrs Swithin and Mr Oliver when suddenly it is changed to actuality:

And he *would* say: "Today? By Jupiter! I'd forgotten!"
"If it's fine", Mrs Swithin *continued*, "they'll act on the terrace..." (20. Emphasis added.).

Again, Miss La Trobe anticipates the reconciliation between Giles and Isabella: "There was a high ground at midnight; there the rock; and two scarcely perceptible figures...She heard the first words" (147). The picture is realised at the end of the novel:

It was the night that dwellers in caves had watched
from some high place among the rocks.

Then the curtain rose. They spoke. (152)

The future has become the present.

However, it is not only the present that dominates the novel like the “chuff, chuff, chuff” of the gramophone which ticks away time. The machine marks time only between the acts, in the interval; during the acts themselves we get the pageant of English history from the Elizabethan age down to the present. Historical time, which was coalesced into the active present of a person’s life in Orlando, and which was directly presented in The Years is here but one mode of time. The pageant recreates some stages in the English past. Besides it, Pointz Hall with its many portraits and the watch “that had stopped a bullet on the field of Waterloo” (p. 10), and the countryside around it where, beneath the churchyard wall, “the old families who had all intermarried...lay in their deaths intertwined” (p. 9), also evoke the historical aspect of time.

Evolutionary time is also explored in the novel. It is mostly presented through the musings of Mrs Swithin as she reads an Outline of History. She thinks of the prehistoric monsters of the times when the entire continent was one (10); she looks at the pictures of “mammoths, mastodons, prehistoric birds” (151). As she finishes a chapter about prehistoric man and goes to bed, we return to the present, the June night when Isa and Giles, alone together for the first time that day, have their moment of reconciliation.

The pageant brings together all the three periods of time (Johnstone 371). Primarily, it is a review of historical time. It is once saved from failure by the bellowing of cows, “the primeval voice”; and it ends with present time.

Prehistoric time, like historical time, is shown as leading up to the present. Mrs Swithin thinks of the rhododendron forests “between three and five”; she muses about the prehistoric monsters “from whom presumably... we descend” (10).

For Mrs Swithin the past only illuminates the present but does not survive in it. With all her sense of history and prehistory she says, “We’ve only the present” (62). Miss La Trobe’s pageant shows man as

essentially the same in any age, and Mrs Swithin is conscious of man's evolution from beasts. For in all these, time is conceived, to relate it to our basic distinction, as essentially spatial. Indeed, as Johnstone suggests, the novel shows Virginia Woolf's sense of the vast space (Johnstone 371). Mrs Swithin thinks of the swallows that come each year from Africa; she becomes, as it were, the swallows themselves, as her brother Bartholomew calls her a "Swallow".

It is not that Virginia Woolf has forgotten the psychic dimension of time, for she says of Mrs Swithin: "It took her five seconds in actual time, in mind time ever so much longer" to separate the actual person, Grace, from a monster she was visualising (11). But Virginia Woolf has come back, it seems, to clock-time simply because it is actual. Psychic time is an individual perception while clock-time unites people, if superficially, in spatial terms—as the gramophone's ticking does. Psychic time, again, is too intense an experience to be sustained for long. Whereas Mrs Dalloway hopes to live in others' consciousness, Mrs Swithin stakes her immortality in perception and in things: "We live in others... we live in things" (53). It has to be pointed out that the "others" she hopes to live in are equivalent to "things" which are spatial, like the boots that remain in Jacob's Room. In other words, Mrs Swithin does not hope to survive in the consciousness of others; hers is

not a mystic survival as Mrs Ramsay's is. She hopes to live in objects and perception through, as it were, seasonal rebirth in the sense in which one's children are one's rebirth. Speaking the words quoted above to William Dodge, she takes him to the nursery: "Standing by the cupboard in the corner he saw her reflected in the glass. Cut off from their bodies, their eyes smiled, their bodiless eyes, at their eyes in the glass" (54). The body might disappear but we live through our eyes, our perceptions. But as though showing him a more practical and understandable way, she opens the door and shows him the nursery. Coming as an answer to her question "what next?" the nursery symbolises the possibility of rebirth for the race, if not for the individual. The theory, far from being mystical as Mrs Dalloway's, is the commonplace view of evolution, of what may be termed racial heredity. This is emphasised by the image of the swallows. They return every year, suggesting to Mrs Swithin the cycle of birth and rebirth. The rebirth, again, of the race for Mrs Manresa who is with her realises that "it was unlikely... that the birds were the same" (74).

The clock, conceived in the earlier novels as a superfluity, is here recognised as inevitable. In Jacob's Room, it was an exception: "The clock, however, struck" (127. Emphasis added). Here, it is the rule: "And, of course, once more the chime pealed" (36. Emphasis added).

As an individual, then, one has to live in the present a transitory life. With her sense of the past and of a possible future, Mrs Swithin tries to live in the present moment, enriching it, “increasing the bounds of the moment by flights into past or future; or sidelong down corridors and alleys” (11). In her essay “The Moment: Summer’s Night”, Virginia Woolf wrote, “If you are young, the future lies upon the present, like a piece of glass, making it tremble and quiver. If you are old, the past lies upon the present, like a thick glass, making it waver, distorting it” (Woolf Collected Essays II 293). Between the Acts, which begins with the words “It was a summer’s night...”, has much in common with this essay. Isa who is comparatively young feels that she has a future, “the future disturbing our present” (62). And Mrs Swithin believes that the past shapes the present.

More than the moment of extraordinary vision it is the ability of art to integrate people, and to perpetuate this integrity that the novel considers. Clock-time unites, but superficially and temporarily; art finds the essential unity in things because imagination is “one-making” (122). Between the acts the gramophone ticks: “Chuff, chuff, chuff went the machine. Time was passing. How long would time hold them together?” (106). But during the acts the audience attains a deeper unity, culminating in the last act showing the present. Then, “the very

cows joined in...and the barriers which should divide Man the Master from the Brute were dissolved” (128). Miss La Trobe the artist unites people and achieves “from chaos and cacophony measure; but not the melody of surface sound alone controlled it” (131). As the Rev, Streatfield, the representative of the whole audience, says in his speech, “Each is part of the whole” (133); “We act different parts; but are the same” (134).

This unity is not imposed, nor is it transitory. The audience, reluctant to go, linger there. They echo the words of the gramophone to “keep together”. But time, typified by machines like the car and the aeroplane, interrupts the unity. The gramophone itself sings, “Unity...Dispensity”, provoking the question: “Are machines the devil, or do they introduce a discord...Ding, dong, ding...” (140). But the unity survives it. At night, Isa and Giles are reconciled as Miss La Trobe visualised.

Here clock-time is contrasted not with psychic time but with art mainly by virtue of the deeper unity which art attains. Moreover, clock-time develops mechanical responses and customary behaviour to which the society is subjected through the centuries. But art with its imaginative ability inspires creative responses. For instance, Miss La Trobe’s show

stirs in Mrs Swithin her “unacted part” of Cleopatra. This vision of creative unity is the suggestion that the novel leaves one with in the end—the unity not merely during the acts but between them as well.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

Virginia Woolf was troubled by the chaotic and transitory nature of human life. Over this life, she sought to make human personality integrated and permanent. Integrated personality is one which observes the various contradictions in the world and apprehends the essential unity that underlies them and makes them complementary. These contradictions form the usual basic pattern of her novels. Bernard Blackstone finds a series of such “counterpoints” in them: life and death, solitude and society, the young and the adult. Jean O Love finds the opposition of subjective thought and objective reality. James Hafley points to the pair of social and inner worlds, and Alice van Buren Kelley finds the dialectic between fact and vision. One might add to the list *ad infinitum*, but the more basic of these pairs include order and flux, the masculine and the feminine, intellect and instinct. These pairs, which pertain either to human relations or to the world of things, are often complementary and parts of a greater whole. Only the androgynous mind apprehends the essential unity.

This unity and the consciousness that apprehends it are self-contained entities. The very consciousness of this unity makes personality an integrated, “organic whole”—to use G E Moore’s phrase—for the integrated personality is a sum greater than its parts, which are complementary contradictions on the one hand, and the perception of them by the consciousness on the other.

How to make this personality immortal? Even the androgynous perceive the unity of things only for a moment. Only these moments of vision, then, are worthy of being immortalised. The novels of Virginia Woolf’s early and middle career explore the two ways of immortalising personality—through others and through things, both defying external time. Her later novels seek to sustain the moment which also can bind men together.

Jacob’s Room shows how consciousness and the objects of its perception (the room and the things in it) survive the body. In Mrs Dalloway Septimus relives in Mrs Dalloway by the mere fact of her being conscious of his integrity. Mrs Ramsay’s vision in To the Lighthouse is identified with a thing—the objective correlative of the lighthouse; she is retrieved from death by Lily’s apprehension of this vision.

In exploring the possibilities of such a survival, Jacob's Room shows what consciousness is not; it is not subject to actual time, its time is not quantitative, and it does not end with a knowledge of the material. Mrs Dalloway defines it in positive terms. But it is evasive and incommunicable. Hence its need to invest itself in things.

But the life of consciousness is not as actual as that of the body. The vision of the integrated self which transcends time comes, among the living, either to mad men like Septimus in whom it is sustained, or to other androgynous selves to whom it comes only in patches of moments. To the Lighthouse showed how the moment can be perpetuated; The Waves how it can unite people; but it could not do both at once. Between the Acts indicates art as the force which unifies and sustains our vision and our moments of vision.

Virginia Woolf, then, sought an enduring absolute first in the time-defying consciousness which perceives unity, and then in the perceived objects like the lighthouse. She found that neither can do without the other, being but one part of the organic whole which alone can be absolute. Thus, lastly, she affirmed art as the agent of lasting unity. Art does this by transfixing the moment of vision which derives its

integrating power from the actual, linear aspect of time and its sustaining power from its intuitive, psychic mode.

In her last novel, Between the Acts, Virginia Woolf presents Miss La Trobe the artist is in this triumphant mood: “She could straighten her back. She could open her arms. She could say to the world, You have taken my gift! Glory possessed her—for one moment” (145). In the triumph of her inspiring vision, she melts into the dark, not waiting to hear the praise that is her due. Indeed, before the novel saw the light of day, Virginia Woolf had opted to merge with the eternal night.

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