



## **PROJECTION OF STREAM-OF-CONSCIOUSNESS TECHNIQUE AND FILM SENSE IN MRS. DALLOWAY AND MANJU : AN ANALYSIS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This paper throws light on the mental reactions of various characters who have been portrayed in the novels **Mrs. Dalloway** and **Manju** where the story is narrated through the memories of characters. Both Virginia Woolf and Vasudevan Nair have skillfully employed the Stream-of-Consciousness technique of communicate rather significantly bringing home the point that “film and literature do more than share the distinction of being story telling arts, both come to this propensity naturally.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Comparative Literature is “the study literature beyond the confines of one particular country and the study of the relationships between literature on the one hand and areas of knowledge and belief such as painting, sculpture, architecture, music, philosophy, history, social sciences, etc., on the other” (Remark 1). In short it is the comparison of literature with another or others and with other spheres of human expression. This all comprehensive definition can take into its fold one more item, namely, the Theatre Arts, particularly Cinema. A film is nothing but an unchanging theatre. So film can be considered to be a part of literature yielding easily to a comparison with novel as a literary form. While painting, music, dance, literature, theatre, poetry and other arts have been enjoyed since the time of

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antiquity, the motion picture is perhaps the only new art form to have been developed entirely within the contemporary times.

Like painting, motion pictures present a two-dimensional image within the confines of a frame. Like music, they manipulate their material within the dimension of time like dance, Films are choreographed to utilize space for aesthetic effect. Like literature, Films are based on a narrative or story and develops characterization and mood. Like poetry, Films can convey several levels of meaning simultaneously. Added to these older arts are photography, Film editing, Camera movements, special effects and other elements that are unique to the film, resulting in an art form that is more complex than any other yet devised. Films can record cultures and they can treat social or political issues and other aspects of society to capture relationships rather difficult to communicate by other means. As a craft, the Film may be designed for self-contained activity of amusement and entertainment or it may be designed to provoke emotion and thought which are meant to be carried forward in same way into the affairs of practical life so that it has some social influence.

Film studies became popular in American and European colleges and Universities from 1960's onwards at a time When there were a number of new currents of thought. "Most of these currents sought to Foster a materialist ideology against the prevalent idealist ideology characteristic of the 'bourgeois' society" (Remark 1). A further extension of filmisation is possible, by adding more currents of thought drawn from literature. The present day films have two major streams: 1. The external cinemas dealing with the social and realistic aspects of life in general in which individuals are components, 2. The internal cinemas concentrating on the mind's workings of an individual to whose existence the world around him becomes an inevitable component. The former films lend themselves to the production of 'Commercial films' which have all entertainment values and satisfy the heart, where as the latter films invariably become 'Art films' which have to expose and dramatize the complexities of an individual's mind there by appealing to the head. Literature has been a source for both the modes and the modern technological sophistication has made possible to produce more 'Art Films'. Such films can be attempted by interpreting intricate 'literary techniques' like 'Stream-of-Consciousness'. Since Stream-of-Consciousness technique can be considered as a filmic one, by using comparative literature norms, the study of a novel and film has been taken up to see how the stream-of-Consciousness technique is manipulated in a film.

The novels taken up for analysis are **Mrs. Dalloway** by virginia Woolf and **Manju** by M.T. Vasudevan Nair. The rise of the Stream-of-Consciousness technique, on the eve of the First world war marks the beginning of a new epoch in the realm of English novel. Though the phrase 'the Stream of Consciousness' is used today to refer to a popular novelistic technique,

it has a psychological origin. The phrase was first coined and put to use by William James, a great psychologist. In the light of his studies in psychology, he concluded that:

*“Every definite image in the mind is steeped and dyed in the free water that flows round it. The significance, the value of the image is all in his halo or penumbra that surrounds and efforts it. Consciousness does not appear in itself chopped up in bits. Like a bird’s life, it seems to be made on an alternation of flights and perchings. The rhythm of language expresses this, where every thought is expressed in a sentence and every sentence closed with period. It is nothing joined. It flows. A river or a stream is the metaphor by which it is most naturally described. Let us call it the stream of thought or of consciousness or of subjective life” (239).*

The Stream-of-Consciousness as literary technique has been directly or indirectly influenced by the psychological and philosophical writings of William James and Henri Bergson, the psychoanalytical works of Freud, Adler and Jung and by the post-impressionistic paintings, Cubism and the techniques of music. In literature, as in psychology, the phrase ‘Stream of Consciousness’ represents a new concept of time and reality. In the words of David Daiches:

*“The Stream-of-Consciousness technique is a means of escape from the tyranny of the time dimension. It is not only an indistinct memory that the past impinges on the present and also in much vaguer and subtle ways, our mind floating off down some channel superficially relevant but really having a definite starting. Off place from the initial situation, so that in presenting the characters reactions to the events, the author will show us state of mind modified by associations and recollections deriving from the present situation but referring to a constantly shifting series of events in the past” (P 32).+*

Perhaps the clear definition of the techniques is the one that comes from the pen of Robert Humphrey who comments:

*“We may define Stream-of-Consciousness Fiction as a type of Fiction in which the basic emphasis is placed on exploration of the pre-speech levels of Consciousness for the purpose, primary revealing the psychic being of the Character” (P 4).*

He confines himself to the pre-speech level of consciousness, depicting its traits in the light of William James’ theory of Consciousness. It has been felt that when thoughts and feelings of mind and heart are depicted into words, some of them lose their meaning. Certain shades of meaning can not be caught into words. In order to overcome this difficulty, novelists have



invented certain techniques to express the vague and fleeting mental life into words. The Stream-of-Consciousness is one such technique. The Consciousness of their characters quite often forms the subject matter of their words. These novelists, in general, observe a sort of objectivity and detachment to circumvent the difficulties of introspection. James Joyce follows this method modeled by Flaubert. The artist is alive all through his work but always remains unseen and hidden. **In A Portrait of the Artist as a young man**, he makes his position absolutely clear when he says that the artist is within his work, behind, and beyond and above his “handi work paring finger nails” ( James 219). But the feelings expressed are highly subjective. Therefore, it may be concluded that a Stream-of-Consciousness novel is mostly auto biographical in nature. The novelist reveals his mind in his novels and the reader’s mind is supposed to identify with various minds of the novelist’s creation.

Time plays an important role in the Stream-of-consciousness technique. The faced of human consciousness is nothing but the awareness of time. Men field the passage of time in their personal experiences and observe it in their environment. People feel, think and act in the time flow. Real time is spatial where as the psychological time is in the mind. The new concept of time has influenced “ the theme, the form and the medium of language” (Issacs 114). In the novels, the characters are governed by the chronological, as well as psychological time. This time factor has left its deep imprint on language also in which experiments have been carried out to depict the simultaneity, immediacy, the backward and forward movement. The time shift in the Stream of Consciousness technique has been adopted by the novelists to explore the mind of the character and to present events and things on the plane of the mind. According to Robert Humphrey, there are three devices in Stream of Consciousness technique. They are interior monologue, omniscient description and soliloquy. The device of the interior monologue has been adopted in the Stream of Consciousness technique to delineate the mental phenomena. The object of this device is to enable the reader to enter into the inner life of a character straight-away. There are two basic types of interior monologue, which can be conveniently designated as “direct” and “indirect” (Humphrey 25). Direct interior monologue is represented with negligible another interference that presents consciousness directly to the reader. The reader lands directly into the mind of the author. Perhaps the most skillful direct interior monologue is that which comprises the last forty-five passages of James Joyce’s **Ulysses**. It represents the meanderings of the Consciousness of Molly Bloom while lying in bed. Indirect interior monologue is the type of interior monologue in which the omniscient author presents unspoken material as if it were directly from the consciousness of a character with commentary and description to guide the reader through it. For success in producing a more suitable effect through the use of this technique, one must look to virginia woolf who obviously uses the Stream-of-Consciousness technique is **Mrs. Dalloway** and **To the Light House**. Virginia woolf said in her essay, “Modern Fiction”:



*“Let us record atoms as they fall, let us trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearances, which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness” (The Common Reader 213)*

An examination of the opening lines of **Mrs. Dalloway** helps in identifying such a technique:

*“Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself for lucky had her work cut out of her. The doors would be taken of their hinges. Rumples mayers men were coming. And, then, thought Clarissa Daloway, what a morning-Fresh as, if issues to children on a beach what a lark! What a plunge! For so it has always seemed to her .....” (Mrs. Dalloway 5).*

The second type of Stream of Consciousness technique is the description of omniscient author. The novelist in English who used this technique most consistently is Dorothy Richardson in **The Pilgrimage**. The third device is stream of Consciousness technique is ‘the soliloquy’ which may be defined as “the technique of representing the psychic content and process of a character directly from character to reader without the presence of an author, but with an audience tacitly assumed” (Humphrey 36). Soliloquy, as one obviously knows, is a dramatic device skillfully manipulated by a dramatist to reveal to the audience the inner workings of the mind of the character and also to allow the progression of the dramatic action. Shakespeare’s **Hamlet**, **Macbeth** and **Othello** have major soliloquies and so does Marlowe’s **Dr. Faustus**. There are many novels in English in which this device has been employed. William Faulkner’s **As I lay Dying** is composed entirely of the soliloquies of fifteen characters. Another set of device other than these three for controlling the movement of stream of conscious fiction is called cinematic device. The interplay between the modern picture and fiction in the twentieth century provides material for an enlightening and enormously valuable study” says Eisenstein in the book **The Film Sense** (P 128).

‘Montage’ is the basic device for cinema. ‘Face out’, ‘cuttings’ ‘Panorama’, ‘close-ups’ are secondary devices. ‘Face-outs’ are the diminishing of light from one scene and switching over to another scene, while cutting’ is the sudden stop of one scene and imposing the next scene. ‘Panorama’ is a long shot representing a landscape or another view, often exhibited by being unrolled and made to pass continuously before the spectator. “Close-ups were used to emphasize what was significant” (Macmahon 43). The technique of cutting from one shot to another is known as ‘Montage’. Thus, within a cut from one shot of another, a variety of meaningful things can be added. Robert Humphrey comments:

*“Montage in the film sense then, refers to a class of devices which are used to show the inter-relation or association of ideas such as rapid succession of*

*images or the super imposition of image on image or the surrounding of focal image by related ones. It is essentially a method to show composite or diverse views of the subject, in short, to show multiplicity” (49)*

Today montage is still employed sparingly and in conjunction with other techniques, but it is used in **Potemkin** as the heart of creative process. So phisticated use of montage techniques has allowed film makers to manipulate time and space. Lengthy, boring passages in films can be shortened by the use of montage. Thus, montage as a crucial element in film language is used to form a narrative sequence to evoke an emotive response from the audience and to control the presentation of time and space. In the words of Robert Humphrey,

*“The chief function of all the cinematic devices particularly of the basic one of montage is to express movement and co-existence. It is this readymade device for representing the non-static and the non-focused which the Stream-of-Consciousness writers have grasped to aid them in accomplishing what is after all, their fundamental purpose; to represent the dual aspect of human life the inner life of simultaneously with the outer life” (P 50)*

David Daiches points out that there are two methods to represent montage in fiction. One is that the subject can remain fixed in space and the consequence can move time. The result in the time-montage or association of ideas from one time on those of another. “The other possibility is for time to remain fixed and for the spatial element to change, which results in space montage”. A glance at Virginia woolf’s artistry will reveal how the cinematic method is transferred to fiction. In the opening pages of **Mrs. Dalloway**, the basic method of indirect interior monologue is used to present clarissa Dalloway to the reader. The reader stays within Carissa’s unconsciousness for the first sixteen pages thus. The spatial relationship is static. The number of images, however, is amazing, as is their diversity in subject and the time of occurrence. A summary record of them reveals a fairly complex montage effect with most of the cinematic device being used. The following out time synopsis records only the major images which are sufficient to illustrate the principles montage. The unified subject is the character’s egocentric consciousness.

First, clarrisa thinks of preparation for a party in the immediate future, then she shifts to the present moment and considers what a fine morning it is, there is ‘a flash-back’ over twenty years in which she thinks of the fine days at Bourton: still in the past, but on a specific day, she reveals a conversation with Peter Walsh with all its minute details; there follows a vision in the near future of Peter Walsh’s proposed visit to London; at this point, the device of ‘multiple view’ is employed and the reader leaves clarrissa’s consciousness for a few lines to enter that of a stranger who observes clarissa crossing the street; back in clarissa’s stream, one finds her contemplating in the present moment, her love for West minister, that is a ‘fade-

out' of her sentimental musings and she recalls the previous evenings conversation about the war being over; this in turn 'fades out' and the reader is back with her joy at being part of London at the present moment; here the principle of 'cutting' is employed to present a brief conversation. Clarissa has with Hugh Whitbread whom she meets on the Street; the conversation, as it is freely reported, 'fades out' to close itself in Clarissa's Stream of Consciousness again. While she is concerned with various aspects of the Whitebread; the time quickly shifts from an indefinite past, to the present moment, the immediate future, and to the distant past; still in the far past, Clarissa thinks of Peter and Hugh at Bourton; this is abruptly changed by 'cutting' to contemplations again of the fine weather at the present moment; which 'fades out' to the thoughts of Clarissa's own 'divine vitality' as she knew herself in the indefinite past.

The above techniques stated in the first six pages of the first unit of the sixteen pages is insufficient to illustrate the time-montage of Clarissa's consciousness and how it defines the movement of the stream, "For the other method of montage, in which the time element is static and the space element moves in Joyce who has elicited praise from the famous exponent of montage in the films of Sergie Eisenstein" (Leyda 104). This device has been exploited by James Joyce in the 'wandering Rocks' episode of **Ulysses**. It is to be stated that where as Joyce has the great virtue of techniques, it is Virginia Woolf who blends with expertise in **Mrs. Dalloway** and **To The Light House** by using the Stream-of-Consciousness techniques. James Joyce has utilized the superimposing of interior montage with space montage as a basic technique. Basic interior monologue and the superimposing of montage on it is maintained by Virginia Woolf.

Virginia Woolf, one of the major exponents of the stream of consciousness novel in her article 'Modern Fiction', repudiates the objective method of Bannet, Wells and Galworthy and says:

*"Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day, 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 not a series of big lamps symmetrically arranged; but a luminous halo, a semi transparent envelop surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end" (Woolf 88).*

She thus opines that the activities of the mind at a single moment can become the subject-matter of a novel. Mrs. Dalloway depicts the real time, the psychological time combined with the mechanical time. Clarissa Dalloway, Peter Walsh and Septimus Smith are the chief characters. Clarissa Dalloway is the central character through whose stream of thought, the events are seen in the novel. The novel opens with Mrs. Dalloway going out to buy flowers for the party and then comes a description of the tea party. Within these limits, a most



complex and fascinating pattern of human experience is woven. It is composed of the day dreams, memories and immediate impressions of this central character, enriched by transitions into the consciousness of other characters who are connected with Mrs. Dalloway in some emotional or ever merely passing relationship. In spite of the transition from one thought process to another and in spite of the sudden change from present to pastime and from past present, the novel remains simple and uncomplicated.

“In Mrs. Dalloway, sometimes the reader moves into”the consciousness of character who is stationary in the space; at another time, he observes various events occurring in the space at a time, and the mental reactions of various characters have been portrayed in the novel” (Daiches 203). The characters are fixed in time, the consciousness of many persons has been delineated. An example of this is the exposition of the motor car. Here one can see the consciousness of many persons being delineated. Mrs. Pym goes to the window and apologises after the explosion. Edge J. Watters says humorously “Prime Ministers Kyar”. Specious sets people conjecturing, as to whose car it is Lucrezia speculates that perhaps, Queen is inside the car. People and children also glancing at the car and the special personage occupying it. Mrs. Dalloway coming out of mulberry’s with her flowers guesses that perhaps the queen is there with in the car. similarly the sky-writing of an aero plane draws the crowd. Mrs. Coaks looks up at the sky. The aero plane is writing ACE and L.

*“That’s an E” and Mrs. Bletchely – or a dancer-  
It’s toffee” murmured Mr. Bowley – a dancer” (Mrs. Dalloway 5)*

Virginia woolf takes another point in the outside world, in board street, in June morning. She also depicts various points of consciousness in different characters. For example, Peter Walsh’s Stream of thought has been vividly described by her. Peter walsh a former lover of Mrs. Dalloway, has come back from India and is likely to attend her garden party. Mrs. Dalloway asks him not to forget her party. From this point, Peter Walsh’s thought shifts backward in time. He recollects his experience in India, the disease there, his live for clarissa, and the change in her. He seen things in retrospection and his mind moves backward to the condition in India, and then it moves towards the present from the past, while the thinks of the speed of the motor car and the mechanics. The plate-glass window of the motor car manufacturer. Seen by him also governs his flow of thought. The entire thought process, of course, centres on clarissa.

The next important character in Mrs. Dalloway is Septum Warren smith, whose Stream of thought reflects the honor and obsessions with guilt and death. He is terror-stricken, renown and thinks of committing suicide. He sees the wrath of his diseased friend Evans and commits suicide. Lucrezia smith’s Stream of thought mirrors her sense of English, caused by the illness of her husband and of her issuelessness. Her frustration and agony increase when



she realizes that her husband's ailment has not been cured by Dr. Holmens and the psychiatrist Bradshaw. Virginia Woolf reveals the subtle. Mental states of her characters in Mrs. Dalloway. The reference of the clock time, now and then, is meaningful. It denotes a break in the continuity of time from the past to the present and serves an artistic purpose, enabling the author to part of the shift of thoughts. Septimus could travel to a timeless past, in the viewless wings of poetry, where the present, past and future become one interminable moment. Woolf seems to suggest that only poetry can do this wonder. No doubt, Virginia Woolf's novels have depicted the psychological time, memory instincts and insertion so much stressed by Bergson. The Stream-of-Consciousness technique has been adopted by her in most of her outstanding novels. She experiments with a variety of techniques to unravel the mystery of mind, blends traditional devices with the Stream-of-Consciousness technique and achieves unique craftsmanship.

Vasudevan Nair's Manju has also been acclaimed by the critics as a Stream-of-Consciousness novel. As the renowned Malayalam critic R. Leela has put it, "In this short novel Manju (1964) he uses the technique of Stream-of-Consciousness. The story is narrated by the Stream-of-Consciousness of the heroine Vimala" (P 162). Manju depicts the English of a frustrated young lady waiting for the flow of grace that never comes. It is the story of the stream Vimala of a boarding school at Nainital. Her life must have been one strength of dedicated work with no colour in it. She happens to meet one Sudhi Kumar Mishra, who visits Nainital a few years ago. This is probably a turning-point in her otherwise quiet life, a relationship which leaves permanent ripples in her life-stream. She waits for him. The story is narrated through the memories of the protagonist Vimala. There is no action other than her consciousness. The author uses interior monologue, a trial of stream-of-consciousness technique to reveal the childhood days of Vimala. While sitting on the way side seat and looking at the deserted lake, she hears the bell of the Nain Devi temple. She remembers the past.

*"In her childhood, she used to visit the village temple every Tuesday and Friday. Beyond the paddy fields and the sun-strewn lane lined with yellow flowers was the temple. She could still see the stone-paved lane, there were small huts of weavers on the way and their yards were always full of line on which yarn was hung. When returning from the temple she would always gather handful of loral muts near the fence" (Mist 23)*

The author has employed indirect interior monologue. As Robert Humphrey puts it,

*"Indirect interior monologue is, then, that type of interior monologue in which an omniscient author presents unspoken material as if it were directly from the*



*consciousness of a character and with commentary and description guides the reader through it” (P 12)*

The omniscient author presents unspoken materials as if it were directly from the consciousness of vimala. He describes and comments on it. The author intervenes to describe vimala’s childhood experience not directly through her mind. He acts a the scene guide for the reader. The matter is presented in the manner of straight narrative by the author. Another type of Stream-of-consciousness technique is the description of the omniscient author. This technique of Stream-of-Consciousness may be defined simply as ”the novelistic technique used for representing the psychic content and process of a character in which an omniscient author describes that psyche through conventional methods of narration and description” (Humphrey 34). The author makes use of this technique to review the present and past condition of Vimala’s father,

*“it has been nearly two years since he was bedridden like this wherever she came close to the sick and she would wish death to him would only be a blessing. For the man whom she had admired in her father was already dead. Whenever she thought of her father, the picture of a man in a grey suit and felt that a tall taken than walking upright, singing his walking stick, would rise before her eyes. Father was not only the master of house but the tyrant of his thirty kingdom” (Mist 26)*

As Humphrey has viewed, this technique is made used of few representing the psychic content and process of vimala and the omniscient author makes an elaborate description of the psyche. The narration is presented from the focal point of the omniscient author. The reader here is always within the character of vimala. The method is entirely descriptive and is in the third person narrative. Similarly the author probes into the mind of vimala in an effort to find out the hidden thoughts and feelings with in the unconscious which are likely to become naughty to disturb her entire being. Vimala feels a slight relief while sliding under the think quilt on the fibre bed:

*“She felt unusually tired. She closed her eyes and thought. She would sleep early. It was n’t sleep. But a feeling of falling into an unknown abyss. Not only her body but her bed, the room and even the whole building all falling down from the top of the peak like a fluff of cotton, lazily, slowly, whirling towards the depths..... The mind was like a wild monkey springing from the place to another or else why should she think of Rashmi at this moment” (Nair 26)*

Here the author describes the wanderings of the mind. The mind is not a Static one. It is like a wild monkey springing from one place to another. Vimala's mind is like that. It switches from one thought to another. While seeing Rashmi and her boy friend vimala sees though her made up story and guesses that Rashmi is going to Haldava with her boy friend. Such a mental visualization is only the reflection of the repressed desire, of seeing together her own self and sultir, in the images of Rashmi and her boy friend. Clarissa's around past in revived in the memory when she sees the figure of Hugh at a distance, but poor vimala is only a surrogate timid pleasure that manifests itself through shadows. When the waterman amar singh informs vimala that the holy festival is day after the next day, the white clouds of memories pass through vimala's mind; she remembers the last season:

*"The sound of horses hooves on the stonepaved road. The dark horse-keeper. His dirty woolen coat weight down by his full pockets. A dirty fur cap and a scarf around her reck, Two horses one white and the other grayish-brown"*  
(PP 21-22)

Through that, she remembers the last season:

*"The sound of horses hooves on the stone Paved road. The dark horse-keeper. His dirty woolen coat weight down by his full pockets. A dirty fur cap and a scarf around her neck, Two horses one white and the other greyish-brown"* (Nair 22)

Through that, she remembers the horse riding with sudhir. The comes a flow of past memories, their shopping, walking and sudhir's visit to mary cities. Now she has a sudden feeling of loneliness. In order to overcome that she says "I am not alone, not alone any more" (P23). Instances abound to show that the entire novel depicts the life of vimala through the stream of thought and flows frequently in her mind. Nevertheless it is obvious that M.T. Vasudevan Nair hurdles more of the flash-back technique, than that of the Stream of Consciousness mode. The novelist, of course, makes use of the Stream-of-Consciousness technique to convey the theme of waiting. Manju or mist then symbolizes the cloudy thoughts in the mind of the protagonist which conceals the reality most of the time allowing a rare glimpse of it. The mist vanishes with the arrival of the sun. but in vimala's case, the sun is yet to arrive.

To conclude, both Virginia woolf and vasudevan Nair have skillfully employed the Stream-of-Consciousness technique to communicate rather significantly various 'messages' simultaneously, bringing home the point that "film and literature do more than share the distinction of being story telling arts, both come to this propensity naturally" (Boyum 39).



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