

Page - (01) B.A. Part I (English Honours)  
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or

### Stream of Consciousness Novel

The modern psychological novel was born sometime between 1913 and 1915. We may call it the stream of consciousness novel, or the novel of the silent, the internal monologue. These novels sought the "atmosphere of the mind". Three novelists were writing almost at the same time. Marcel Proust was writing in France and had published two volumes of the eight-part book entitled 'Remembrance of Things Past' in 1913. In England Dorothy Miller Richardson published the first part of her twelve-part novel entitled 'Pilgrimage' in 1915 and the last part in 1938. In between the two an Irishman, then a school teacher named James Joyce began publishing his novel entitled 'A Portrait of the Artist as a young man' in serial form in 1914. These three books



proved to be the turning point in the imaginative literature of our time. These three novels had three things in common (i) they seemed to be autobiographical, (ii) language of poetry and (iii) there was a curious kingship of search, voyage, and pilgrimage. All were voyages through consciousness. In Joyce's 'Portrait' we are always with Stephen, the portrait of him "is a portrait of his sensations and passions, as well as of his thoughts and his intellectual development". The term 'Stream of Consciousness' has been coined by William James in his 'Principles of Psychology'. The purpose was to describe "the flux of mind, its continuity and yet its continuous change." While reading the novels above-mentioned we enter into the atmosphere of the mind. In the modern psychological novel there is no 'story' in the old sense of the term, and there is only one character



with which to identify oneself. According to Leon Edel, after finishing 'Ulysses' or 'The Sound and The Fury' we have a strange experience, the experience of having visited or, so to say, of having lived inside the minds of several persons. In her own words, "By this process of involving us directly in the mental experience of the characters, the psychological novel had added a significant dimension to the art of prose fiction." modern psychological novels are modern in the sense that they reflect an inward turning of the century and this turning inward is very much reflected in the writings of William James, Henri Bergson and Sigmund Freud.

The important novelists of this group are :-

Marcel Proust - 'Remembrance of Things Past'

Dorothy Richardson - 'Pilgrimage'

James Joyce - 'A Portrait'



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of the Artist as a young man, 'Ulysses' and 'Finnegans Wake' etc.

Henry James - 'The Portrait of a Lady', 'The Ambassadors', 'The Sacred Fount', 'The Awkward Age' etc.

William Faulkner - 'The Sound and the Fury', 'Light in August', 'Go Down', 'Moses'.

Virginia Woolf - 'Jacob's Room', 'The Voyage Out - Night and Day', 'Mrs. Dalloway', 'To the Lighthouse', 'The Mark on the Wall' etc.

The psychological novelist may sometimes take us into the mind where we do not care to remain but we must not feel embarrassed or otherwise because in life we do not only meet persons agreeable to us. To sum up we may say that the psychological novelists make us go through the experience of the character by entering into the atmosphere



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of his mind and experience  
the flux of thought as they  
flow through anybody's minds

The end.

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