

WHAT STREAM EXACTLY?
THE BETTER NATURE OF THE EARLY
STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS FICTION

A Master's Thesis

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To my brother, the dearest Bora: a joy to know.

May he swim in the merriest rivers.

“Don’t push the river, it flows by itself.”

Frederick S. Perls

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ABSTRACT

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The term “the stream of consciousness” refers to two different notions: a philosophical psychology theory purported by William James (“the Stream”), and a genre in 20th-century fiction that deals with the conscious unfolding of its characters (“the Novel”). The received narrative, after philosopher and novelist May Sinclair introduced the term to the literary scene in 1918, is that the Novel is best read as a representation of the Stream. However, if the Novelists did in fact intend to represent the Stream, then it is unlikely that they would succeed for the three following issues: the Incommensurability Problem, the Overarching Problem, and the Anatomical Problem. The Incommensurability Problem is about the impossibility of transcribing some crucial aspects of the Stream into the Novel because of the respective natures of the Stream and transcription. The Overarching Problem is about how the chief techniques used in the Novels represent the views of other schools of thought. The

Anatomical Problem is about why it is impossible to capture the form of the Stream.

I argue that these problems ultimately present strong objections to the idea that the Novel is best read as a representation of the Stream. But, in light of these concerns, I also argue that we should not use the Novel's successful representation of the Stream as a criterion to judge the success of the Novel as an artwork.

Keywords: Fiction, Philosophy of Art, Philosophy of Literature, Stream of Consciousness.

ÖZET

HANGİ AKIŞ?

ERKEN DÖNEM BİLİNÇ AKIŞI ROMANININ ASIL DOĞASI

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Yüksek Lisans, Felsefe Bölümü

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“Bilinç akışı” terimi iki farklı kavrama işaret eder: William James tarafından öne sürülmüş bir felsefi psikoloji teorisi (“Akış”) ve karakterlerinin bilinçlerinin çözülmesini ele alan bir 20. yüzyıl roman türü (“Roman”). Filozof ve romancı May Sinclair’in bu terimi 1918’de edebiyat sahnesine tanıtmasının ardından Roman’ın en iyi okumasının bir Akış temsili okuması olduğu düşünülmektedir. Gelgelelim, eğer Romancılar gerçekten Akış’ı temsil etmeyi hedeflemişlerse bile, şu üç sorun yüzünden bu konuda başarılı olmaları olası değildir: Ölçülemezlik Problemi, Kapsayıcılık Problemi ve Anatomik Problem. Ölçülemezlik Problemi, Akış’ın ve yazının ayrı doğaları gereği, Akış’ın önemli kavramsal yönlerinin Roman’a aktarılamayacağını anlatır. Kapsayıcılık Problemi, Roman’da kullanılan başlıca tekniklerin diğer düşünce okullarını kuramlarını temsil ettiğini söyler. Anatomik Problem, Akış’ın biçimini yakalamanın imkansız olduğundan bahseder. Nihayetinde,

bu sorunların, Roman'ın Akış'ın bir temsili şeklinde okunmasına karşı güçlü itirazlar sunduğunu iddia ediyorum. Bu kaygılar ışığında, Roman'ın bir sanat eseri olarak başarılı olup olmadığını değerlendirmek için, Roman'ın Akış'ın başarılı bir temsili olduğu fikrini göz ardı etmemiz gerektiğini savunuyorum.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Bilinç Akışı, Edebiyat Felsefesi, Kurgu, Sanat Felsefesi.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

I believe that our whole psychical existence is something just like
this single sentence, continued since the first awakening of consciousness,
interspersed with commas, but never broken by full stops.

Henri Bergson¹

In this thesis, a project in the history of philosophy intersecting with philosophical psychology and philosophy of literature, I am interested in the question of whether it is ever possible to see the so-called stream of consciousness novel as a representation of the concept of the stream of consciousness (“the Stream”) in philosophical psychology, as suggested by its label.

The concept of the stream of consciousness is peculiar because William James’s description of how consciousness unfolds seems to have brought about a whole new genre of novel on its own. In 1918, philosopher and novelist May Sinclair used the term “the stream of consciousness” to describe Dorothy Richardson’s fiction.

Although Richardson (1933: 562) *hated* the term, calling it a “perfect imbecility,” the term stuck in literary criticism and has since been applied to the works of several

¹ (Bergson, 1920/1975: 70).

modernist novelists including Virginia Woolf and James Joyce (Bowler & Drewery, 2020; McCracken, 2020).²

Sinclair's label and the literary critic's tendency to keep it as a successful depiction of the works in question make it look as if the Novelists aimed to represent a philosophical scientific theory in fiction by using it as a new writing tool. But what is the conceptual link between the Stream and the so-called stream of consciousness novel? As philosophers, we might want more than a passing remark as to how exactly the philosophical psychology theory is related to what the Novelists are doing. Then, it is fitting to inquire about how the Novel might be read as a representation of the Stream.

Although Richardson and Woolf, for example, admitted to aim to take consciousness to be their subject of interest (McCracken, 2020; Woolf, 1948), they did not necessarily talk about the *stream* of consciousness as their objects of representation. Richardson, the first author whose work was labeled "stream of consciousness," explicitly refused having read William James, who coined the term "the stream of consciousness" in philosophical psychology, and instead cited James's brother, the novelist Henry James, as the influence on her writing style (Bowler & Drewery, 2020). The Novelists did not necessarily set out to represent the Stream in their work, but this did not pose a challenge by itself to consider their works in question as representations of the Stream. Some concepts can transpire into the works of artists

² Sinclair (1917: 80) herself had stated that the term was philosophically problematic, to begin with, stressing that "the fact of the unity of consciousness can certainly not be accounted for or explained on the simple theory of consciousness as a stream." Richardson (1933) said that the metaphor cannot account for the stable central core of life.

since they are not always aware of their intentions. That is because “we sometimes do not realize the intentions with which we set out to act” (Lyas & Stecker, 2009: 367). So even though the Novelists did not consciously set out to represent the Stream, the resultant works have still been considered as a representation of the Stream.

The relationship between the concept of the Stream and its representation in fiction is the very one I am interested in. By focusing on the supposed representation of the Stream on the Novel, I will put across that we have reasons to believe that what has generally been called “the stream of consciousness” novels are not representative examples of the concept of the stream of consciousness in philosophical psychology.

CHAPTER 2: STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN PHILOSOPHICAL PSYCHOLOGY

It is believed that William James, a pioneer of modern philosophy and psychology, coined the term “the stream of consciousness” (Friedman, 1955; Humphrey, 1958; Leary, 2018; Steinberg, 1960).³ James devotes a descriptive chapter, “The Stream of Thought,” in *The Principles of Psychology* to the concept of the stream of consciousness where he analyzes the original, continuous, and unbroken stream of thought. He thinks that the “stream” of mental life is a holistic given and its separate elements or parts are abstracted out of this whole unified stream (Leary, 2018). In this chapter, I explain the central and unique aspects of James’s theory of consciousness.

2.1. MENTAL REALM BEFORE JAMES

In the 1860s, the associationist theories of mind were still influential. The human mind was still thought to be a theater or receptor of ideas which come to and go from consciousness under the laws of association. The association principle was the method by which earlier empirical psychologists tried to bring separate elemental ideas together in mental life. Psychology had depended on common speech patterns,

³ See Holland (1986) for why this might not be true.

which tended to recognize a particular aspect of experience and replaced the mental stream with conceptual atomism that fragmentizes the flow into perceived separate subjective entities that come and go. Association is considered to be a passive and impersonal way of filling the gaps of mental life, and James emphasized the active agency of consciousness (Leary, 2018).

Key thinkers of the earlier traditions, like David Hume, proposed that the mind is composed of basic ideas which are obtained from impressions of sensational data. Moreover, they thought that psychological experience is a mechanical combination of preexisting parts that come together to construct a whole (Leary, 2018). That is, for the associationist school, thought is shaped by a basic succession of ideas which are “mere faint replicas of sensory images” (Capek, 1950: 333). James criticized this mechanical process which results in an inner representation of the physical world (Leary, 2018).⁴ He notably denounced Hume because his associationism reduced the conscious flow into a succession of sensations (Capek, 1950). More precisely,

James rejected this view of the mind as re-presenting the passively internalized features of the external world. He argued... that our initial mental states arrive as connected wholes, as mental streams, which we subsequently analyze or *deconstruct* into their personally meaningful aspects (Leary, 2018: 57).

James said that just because the stream *can* be analyzed into myriad components, one must not say that it is composed of those components.⁵ Rather, since we are not aware of such compositions and combinations taking place in our consciousness,

⁴ This theory stating “that smaller elemental ‘stuff’ somehow combines to form the larger units that constitute experience” is called “the mind-stuff theory” (Leary, 2018: 58).

⁵ Trying to refute the mind-stuff theory, James became the first advocate of “the No Experiential Parts Theory” regarding the unity of consciousness.

consciousness must in fact be broken up into several conceptualized elements in a post hoc manner. However, this does not mean that James rejects the laws of association. He acknowledges them as secondary processes following the initial undivided consciousness. The important thing is that “consciousness is holistic *prior* to the forging of additional connections” (Leary, 2018: 189).

Jamesian psychology is based on the idea of an actively engaged mind in selecting and appropriating distinct features of continuous experience. The ongoing stream of consciousness is an undifferentiated, integral, and connected whole without any disruptions and segmentations. Consequently, James urges the psychologists to start their inquiry with experience, and realize that there is no such thing as the experience of “elements” coming together to form a whole consciousness. Rather, “consciousness *comes* ‘together’” (Leary, 2018: 58).

2.2. THOUGHT IS CHANGING

James uses the word “thinking” for any state of consciousness including perceiving, reasoning, recollecting, feeling, deciding (James, 1890/1981; Leary, 2018).⁶ For him, “consciousness” encapsulates distinct states of mental life, and he uses “consciousness” interchangeably with “thinking” (Leary, 2018). By equating thought to consciousness, and arguing that “thought” encompasses all mental activity, James includes both propositional *and* affective content in thought.

⁶ He says he “use[s] the word thinking... for every form of consciousness indiscriminately” (James, 1980: 219-220). Moreover, “mind” for James means what “thought” and “consciousness” mean, as “‘consciousness’ is the functional equivalent of ‘mind’ [for] James” (Leary, 2018: 174). In this thesis, I use “thought” and “consciousness” interchangeably to designate all the conscious states James refers to.

For James, thought is constantly changing so that no conscious state is ever the same as any one before. Although one may come across the same *object*, the elements in our stream are never the same for a second time. James accounts for this by saying that every conscious state corresponds to a cerebral state, and since the brain's remaining the same is physiologically impossible, an unmodified conscious state across time is also impossible to attain. He agrees with Heracleitus in that we never descend the same stream twice (James, 1981). Heracleitus famously compared reality

to the flowing of a river. A man can be said both to step and not-step into the same river, for as he steps in, fresh waters ever flow upon him. Or it can be expressed by saying that one cannot step twice into the same river. There is, in short, no fixed object called 'a river' for him to step into; there are only ever-flowing, ever-changing waters. So it is with us, and with the particular objects of our world: we are and are not; they also are never the same, but always changing, so that we can never lay hold of any definite thing because it changes as we touch it (Freeman, 1946: 114).

This is why James described conscious life as *streaming* and the river analogy is constructed as such. The famous description follows:

Consciousness, then, does not appear to itself chopped up in bits. Such words as 'chain' or 'train' do not describe it fitfully as it presents itself in the first instance. It is nothing jointed; it flows. A 'river' or a 'stream' are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described (James, 1981: 233).

I will revisit the river analogy in Chapter 5, where I talk about the Anatomical Problem faced by the Novelists and illustrate how the river analogy might be faulty, considering the forms of the river, the Stream, and the Novel.

The changing nature of thought illustrates that conscious states can never be completely static. This junction is where James clashes with earlier associationist

views of consciousness which stipulated that conscious life is made up of ‘simple ideas’ that visit and leave consciousness, “essentially in the form of *unchanging* ‘mental atoms or molecules’” (Leary, 2018: 181).

James concludes that no state of mind is ever the same and that every thought is unique in that we apprehend the same objective facts in a new light when we come across them for another time. We react to a given thing through a total sum of experience we have had up to that date. No state dies instantly after a new state comes as the old one’s inertia will still be there. Furthermore, since the changes in the brain states are never discontinuous, their *corresponding* mental states should never be discontinuous as well. Since total history is embedded in the present brain state, no brain state should occur twice. Similarly, our current condition “accompanies the knowledge of whatever else we know” (James, 1981: 235).

Therefore, mental states cannot be formulated in an atomistic way, no matter how convenient it is to do so. That would at best have been a symbolic attempt to represent the nature of consciousness. However, there is no corresponding fact in the nature of consciousness (James, 1981). And this idea of continuity of thought is what I now turn to.

2.3. THOUGHT IS CONTINUOUS

Continuity of thought is extremely important because it illustrates how the Jamesian Stream is different from the earlier associationist schools of thought.

James suggests that consciousness is without breach. That is to say, a) even if there is a time-gap between two conscious states, it is felt as if the second state belongs together with the conscious state before the gap, and b) qualitative changes from one conscious state to another are never absolutely abrupt (James, 1981). No conscious state's content is atomized, rather it is related to other conscious states' contents (Leary, 2018).

It seems as though one cannot talk about the continuity of conscious states considering the (seemingly) abrupt changes or interruptions in sensations. James claims that this is an illusion. He states that one can circumvent this by illustrating that the discrete and discontinuous things are the *objects* themselves, not the thoughts. And one must also realize that the continuous thought is carried on through apparently discrete words and images. One can see that the comings and goings of the objects do not disrupt the conscious flow, just as they do not disrupt the time or space in which they lie. The transition between one thought to another is not a break in consciousness, it is a *part* of the consciousness. All thoughts are *inked* by those which have come before and no single thought is limited to the present alone. The present mental states and the past mental states are owned by the same common self, and since the commonality of self cannot be broken into two by the felt time-gap, the present state is considered to be continuous with the past states.⁷

⁷ In similar veins, Henri Bergson (1975: 56) described the continuity of thought by saying "that the thought translated by the sentence is an indivisible movement, and that the ideas corresponding to each of the words are simply the images or concepts which would arise in the mind at each moment of the thinking *if* the thinking halted; but it does not halt."

In order to account for the continuity and the unity of thought, James introduces two elements of thought that are called “the transitive states,” and “the fringe.” Their existence and importance have not been stressed before by the earlier schools of thought.

2.3.1. THE TRANSITIVE STATES

Our stream of consciousness, James thinks, is made up of an alternation between flights and perchings, like those of a bird. Resting times, the perchings, accompany sensory imaginations which can be contemplated for an indefinite duration whereas flights are full of thoughts of relations. Flights (named “transitive parts”) are situated between periods of rest (“substantive parts”) and they lead our consciousness from one period of rest to the next.

The general error is overemphasizing the substantive parts and undermining the importance of the transitive parts. It has been habitual to recognize the sole existence of substantive parts, accentuated and isolated. This led some prior philosophers to represent consciousness as formed by separate entities, such as juxtaposed dominoes (James, 1981). The earlier associationist psychology erred in stiffening the substantive parts of consciousness into “ideas,” neglecting the connections among them that were *already there in the beginning*, and trying to give an account of their connections in a post hoc manner, i.e., by the laws of association (Leary, 2018).⁸ But

⁸ Association is “the establishment of links between different aspects of experience” (Leary, 2018: 197). Hume (1739/1960: 10) defined it as the unifying bond among ideas “by which one idea naturally introduces another.” James also acknowledges “the process of association... but only *after* the selective *dissociation* of aspects of consciousness from the ongoing, unified stream” (Leary, 2018: 183-184). Originally, consciousness is not made up of broken items needing to be joined together; it is “a seamless, continuous flow” (Leary 2018: 184). Conscious states are not made up of atomistic mental stuff; “[consciousness] comes whole and entire” (Leary, 2018: 195).

James believes that the brain is *always* in a state of change.⁹ If consciousness corresponds to the rearrangement within the brain then it is insensible to expect that consciousness should ever *cease*. Some lingering rearrangements correspond to some kinds of consciousness (hinting at substantive parts), some more swift rearrangements correspond to other kinds of consciousness (transitive parts). This is how James tries to show that the earlier atomistic philosophy of mind is faulty: “as the brain-changes are continuous, so do all these consciousnesses melt into each other like dissolving views... they are but one protracted consciousness, one unbroken stream” (James, 1981: 239-240).

2.3.2. THE FRINGE

James illustrates the relationship between subsequent thoughts as follows: the current excitement of the present thought is influenced by the previous dying thought (or brain-process) which was primarily excited just a moment ago, and this present thought’s excitement has already begun to influence the next thought process’s excitement. At this point, it is helpful to imagine a concave curve whose highest point represents the present maximally excited thought. The points that lie below the one side of the highest point of the curve represent the earlier thoughts and the points that lie below the other side of the highest point represent the thoughts that would follow the present one. These earlier and latter thoughts are sub-maximally excited. The highest point of the curve travels in time, exciting newer and newer processes in the brain. The processes earlier than the present maximally excited process were

⁹ James has three distinct and sometimes conflicting approaches to the mind-body problem (Leary, 2018). Although he is ambiguous one could say that insofar as he is an identity theorist, he is a token identity theorist where the tokens are continuous mental states, not discrete ones.

more intense just a moment ago and the processes which follow the present process will be more intense in a moment. That is neither to say that earlier thoughts have left the consciousness nor to say that the thoughts that will follow have not begun to be formed in the consciousness. They are, in a dimmer form, awake in the consciousness. They are *mixed* with the maximally excited thought.¹⁰ And the earlier brain-tract's influence on our present thought is called the *fringe*.¹¹

Traditional psychology influenced by Hume (and others) overlooked the fact that definite sensorial images are steeped into the water of *feelings of tendency* that surround them (James, 1981).¹² “Feelings of tendency,” Leary (2018: 23) writes, “may be ‘vague’ but they are nonetheless feelings.” Feelings of tendency give us interpretations of the current sensorial images, from where that sensorial image comes and to where it leads, establishing near and remote relations. As James (1981: 246) contends:

The significance, the value, of the [sensory] image is all in this halo or penumbra that surrounds and escorts it, —or rather that is fused into one with it and has become bone of its bone and flesh of its flesh; leaving it, it is true, an image of the same *thing* it was before, but making it an image of that thing newly taken and freshly understood.

¹⁰ James (1920: 258) retained similar conceptions about the change and continuity of thought later in his career: “[Changes in experience] are not complete annihilations followed by complete creations of something absolutely novel. There is partial decay and partial growth, and all the while a nucleus of relative constancy from which what decays drops off, and which takes into itself whatever is grafted on, until at length something wholly different has taken its place.”

¹¹ Although Capek (1950) interprets that the fringe and the transitive states have nearly the same meaning, Bailey (1999) differentiates them by saying that the fringe is an *aspect* of the substantive state whereas the transitive states are segments of subjective consciousness.

¹² “Feelings of tendency” is an important term for Jamesian psychology. It can be understood as designating “the periphery of consciousness” (Leary, 2018: 185). It is significant because it denotes an aspect of consciousness that was previously unacknowledged by the traditional psychologists. James aimed to reiterate the importance of these vague phenomena in our consciousness.

Feelings of tendency account for the *direction* to which our consciousness is going, they are feelings of thoughts that are going to arise next before those thoughts arise. The dynamic meaning of a word (compared to its meaning when we take it statically), for example, is colored by its fringes, by our assessment of whether it fits suitably to the context and the conclusion (James, 1981). For Leary (2018), the directional float the term “feelings of tendency” conveys makes the *stream* metaphor more suitable to the nature of our consciousness. The present sensory image has its roots way before it has already arisen, in the regions of the brain where there are unborn thoughts. Then, the feelings of tendency, more often than not called “the fringe,” can be considered as another way for arguing that our consciousness is in the form of a continuous stream that is neither broken nor atomistic.

Leary (2018) states that James gathers all the vague phenomena (such as “feelings of tendency”, “feelings of relation,” or “the halo”) under the umbrella term “fringe.” Our earlier experiences and their relations are stored in this fringe that directs our consciousness further. And consciousness deals with contextual objects, taking into account all the felt relations, tendencies, and associations in the fringe that are *already* there (Leary, 2018).

2.4. NOVELISTS’ INQUIRIES INTO THE STREAM

Although in the next chapters I argue that some problems pose a challenge to the assumption that the Novel is best read as a representation of the Stream, in this section, I will consider how the Novel might be seen as a successful representation of a Jamesian insight.

The Stream might be useful for a certain kind of novelist who is concerned with depicting consciousness. Consider James's (1981: 221-222) statement regarding that "thoughts... tend to appear as parts of selves." To illustrate the relationship between thoughts and the self, James gives the example of "secondary personal selves," or the contracted and foolish selves. These are cut off from the main personality of the individual and they have continuous memories, habits, and a sense of identity within themselves. They operate under the influence of anesthetics and hypnotic suggestion. The secondary self's feelings and overall conscious states are formed when they are excluded from the consciousness of the primary self (James, 1981). James saw that there might be a possibility of the total consciousness being split into several parts that ignore each other, that do not know what the others know, but that can coexist (Leary, 2018). The noteworthy statement to consider is James's suggestion concerning the *size* of a secondary self. He notes that this size depends on *the number of thoughts* that have been separated from the main self. Also, Leary (2018: 180) interprets that "our consciousness is literally what defines us." Then, can a *character* or *personality* be modeled after a person's thoughts? That is, is personality the sum of one's thoughts?

If "there is no distinction between the thinker and the thought," and "we are, more or less, just the unbroken flow of our experiences" (Bailey, 1999: 152), this would be a fruitful standpoint for the Novelists, as they would be content with their work in terms of giving adequate character analyses since all they should do would be to provide the conscious journey of their characters. If we take personality or character

to be formed by one's thoughts, as James might suggest, we can say that the Novelists are advantageous in that regard, since they detail their characters via unfolding their consciousness.

CHAPTER 3: STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN FICTION AND THE INCOMMENSURABILITY PROBLEM

Le romancier futur dressera une seule âme,
qu'il animera pleinement; par elle seront perçues
les images, raisonnés les arguments, senties les émotions.
Le lecteur comme l'auteur verra tout, les choses et les âmes,
à travers cette âme unique et précise dont il vivra la vie.

Teodor de Wyzewa¹³

3.1. THE BACKGROUND

Having presented the distinctive conceptual features of the concept of stream of consciousness, I now focus on the so-called stream of consciousness novels by the genre's pioneers Dorothy Richardson (1873-1957), James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf (both 1882-1941). Their novels have been considered to be the genre's paradigms (Parsons, 2007).¹⁴ Analyzing the Novel and the understanding of the Stream in literary studies will illustrate why we might have doubts as to why "the stream of

¹³ (de Wyzewa, 1895: 52)

¹⁴ Some examples of the stream of consciousness novels are Richardson's *Pointed Roofs* (1915), *Backwater* (1916), and *Honeycomb* (1917); Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922); and Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927), and *The Waves* (1931). William Faulkner's (1897-1962) works are sometimes cited as other cornerstones in the genre (Humphrey, 1958). However, he is a relative latecomer to the genre, publishing his first stream of consciousness novel, *The Sound and the Fury*, in 1929 when others had already experimented with the genre as fervently as possible.

consciousness novels” are conceptually, technically, and formalistically representative of the *stream* of consciousness.¹⁵ Unlike the general unquestioned views about the Stream’s representation in the Novel, the representative relationship between the Stream and the Novel seems to be tenuous. And the so-called “stream of consciousness” novel faces a multifaceted problem.

Here, we are looking for some philosophical insights, in need of some analytical definitions. I believe analyzing the relationship between the Novel and the Stream might change how we look at the Novel, and how the layperson looks at the Stream. It has been generally assumed that these Novels represent the Stream in a way that they are somewhat its applications in fiction. Many literary scholars first analyze the historical development of the genre, then devote a chapter to James (among other philosophers), *without* explicating the concept of the Stream thoroughly. It is usually taken as a *given* that these Novels “follow” or “depict” the *stream* of consciousness of their characters. Obviously, the *use* of that label suggests that the Novel is an application of the Stream. But the literary critic should not have taken it for granted that the Novel represents the Stream. When you name the genre “the stream of

¹⁵ Another concern about the representation of the Stream in the Novel, one that I will not tackle, might be a historical one: the chronological development of historical attempts to eliminate the plot and present consciousness in psychological fiction. One might wonder whether it would be possible for Richardson, Joyce, and Woolf to pen these novels even without the introduction of the concept of the Stream in philosophical psychology. Joyce cites Édouard Dujardin’s *The Bays are Sere* (published in 1887, three years after James (1884) coined the term “the stream of consciousness” in an article, and three years before the publication of *The Principles of Psychology*, James’s encyclopedic work that made the term famous) as a major influence on his technique (Gilbert, 1955; Mahaffrey, 2013), whereas Richardson cites Henry James (Bowler & Drewery, 2020). Friedman (1955) and Praz (1972) trace the history of the genre and note developments in English, French, and Russian fiction, with authors including Laurence Sterne, George Moore, and Dostoevsky, before the emergence of the concept of the Stream in the 1890s. Spacks (2006: 116) speculates that Sterne “developed an early approximation of stream of consciousness” as early as 1768. This historical asymmetry might be one other reason for us to suspect whether the emergence of the Novel might have already been in its natural development even without the trigger of the Stream. The contribution of the *specific* concept of the Stream to the Novel might as well be only a “push” and these Novels might not be typologically different from some early novels that were written before the emergence of the Stream.

consciousness” genre, you risk identifying the Stream with how the Novel depicts consciousness and presenting the Stream to the general public as if the Stream is something like what the Novel features. But the Stream has multifarious conceptual aspects to it that the Novel cannot touch upon.

I have been talking about representation in fiction. Before I go further, I must briefly talk about what representation is, how fiction can ever represent, and what we might understand from representation in fiction. Overall,

we may say that by “represent” we mean that x represents y (where y ranges over a domain comprised of objects, persons, events, and actions) if and only if (1) a sender intends x (e.g., a picture) to stand for y (e.g., a person), and (2) an audience recognizes that x is intended to stand for y (Carroll, 1999: 50).

The representational relationship can be established through “some combination of titles and like signs, artists’ intentions, and other causal relations, together perhaps with a certain degree of correspondence” (Walton, 1990: 112). Many works of art are representational (Hopkins, 2009). Moreover, literature, among other arts, can employ representation (Carroll, 1999). But how can fiction be representative? Walton (1990) develops a particular representational theory of art (“representation as make-believe”) and claims that fiction is a genre where representation is employed, among other works of art like plays and paintings. For Walton, works of fiction are representative by their virtue of providing tools for the reader to engage in imaginative make-believe games. A thing becomes a represented object of a representative artwork when the artwork affords “propositions about it which the representation makes fictional” (Walton, 1990: 106). For example, Tolstoy’s *War and*

Peace is a novel about Napoleon. Napoleon is a represented object of *War and Peace* because the novel prescribes imaginings about Napoleon by generating fictional truths about him (Walton, 1990). Then, just like *War and Peace* is said to represent Napoleon, the Novel can be said to represent the Stream because it provides a fictional depiction of how the stream of consciousness of its characters unfolds, making the reader imaginatively engage with the depiction of the Stream in writing.

Why were we ever led to believe that these works of fiction are representations of the Stream, in the first place? The Novelists did not necessarily aim to depict the Stream in fiction. Richardson aimed to investigate feminine reality (McCracken, 2020), as opposed to “the current masculine realism” (quoted in Mahaffrey, 2013: 42). Joyce wanted “to escape what he regarded as Ireland’s moribund parochialism” in ways of living and cultural practices, and to introduce narrative and structural modernizations to storytelling (Parsons, 2007: 4). Woolf wanted fiction to do away with the earlier materialistic traditions, including the Edwardian which she believed cannot capture the modern reality that is focused on character (Beach, 1937; Fernald, 2014; Kaye, 2010).

But then, considering that the Novelists did not *intend* to represent the Stream in fiction, is it still possible to regard these Novels as representative of the Stream in order to debunk the claim that the Novels represent the Stream?¹⁶ There have been many prominent views in the literature that stipulate that the resultant artwork can be

¹⁶ Here, the author’s *intention* can be understood as the design or plan in her mind (Wimsatt & Beardsley, 1946), or as her “intention to say certain things in producing [a] text” (Beardsley, 1982/2019: 188).

studied, interpreted, or read independently of its creator. For example, Walton (1990: 111) states that although in some cases, the artist's intention can dictate how the audience interprets the work, he regards "the artist's intention, in most cases, as but one of a loose collection of circumstances bearing on determination of what a work represents." Furthermore, since the artwork has independently perceivable aesthetic features, it must have a critical autonomy, and thus, aesthetic interests should be divorced from the information about the author's intentions (Callen, 2009). More strongly, "the work itself is one thing, and the creator of the work, including his or her intentions, quite another... The critic's task is solely to concentrate on the work itself. And... it follows that any references to artists, including reference to such states of mind as intentions, is irrelevant" (Lyas & Stecker, 2009: 366). These anti-intentionalist views state that trying to "read" the artists' minds, including their intentions, through their work would be "relevant only to biographical inquiries, not to criticism of the work" (Lyas & Stecker, 2009: 366).¹⁷

It was the philosopher, literary critic, and novelist May Sinclair who first used the term "the stream of consciousness" in a literary context. She used it to depict Richardson's works and to defend her technique against the traditional realist critics who claimed that Richardson's novels did not have a form and thence, might be unsuccessful compared to traditional novels which have beginnings, middles, and endings to them (Rose, 1969). Sinclair (1918: 58) said of Richardson's work that

In this series there is no drama, no situation, no set scene. Nothing happens. It is just life going on and on. It is Miriam Henderson's stream of

¹⁷ "The intentional fallacy" and "the authorial intent" in literary criticism are elaborately discussed by Wimsatt and Beardsley (1946).

consciousness going on and on. And in neither is there any grossly discernible beginning or middle or end.

Even though Richardson rejected the label, it has since been used as the name of a certain type of fiction. In order to investigate further, we need to appeal to philosophical analysis of the concept of the stream of consciousness such as it may apply in fiction. I now turn to its definition.

3.2. THE DEFINITION

Bowler and Drewery (2020) note that it is challenging to define the literary term “the stream of consciousness.” Among other problems, there are disagreements as to whether the “stream of consciousness” is a technique, method, or genre. This is in addition to disagreements about the labels and definitions of specific techniques in the genre (See Bowling, 1950; Friedman, 1955; Fullerton Gerould, 1927; Hartley, 1931; Humphrey, 1958; Steinberg, 1968; Steinberg, 1969; Steinberg, 1983). These suggest some initial doubts as to whether the Novel can be a representation of the Stream, for if it were, finding a definition would not have been so problematic since it could have been based on an already defined parallel concept in philosophical psychology.

A literature survey brings out a retrospective and inductive definition of what the literary theorist calls “the stream of consciousness novel” (Bowler & Drewery, 2020; Friedman, 1955; Holman, Thrall, & Hibbard; 1972; Humphrey, 1958; Mahaffrey, 2013; Parsons, 2007; Sotirova, 2013). We can understand what makes a novel a Novel because this definition provides some necessary conditions for being a

Novel.¹⁸ First, “stream of consciousness” is *not* a technique, it is a *type* (genre) of novel (Friedman, 1955). One can differentiate between the traditional realist novel and the Novel.¹⁹ The Novel is a genre of fiction that uses the consciousness of its character(s) as a screen to deal with the representation of several areas of consciousness like the margin of attention, the preconscious, the subconscious, and the unconscious. The Novelists use (direct & indirect) interior monologue, internal analysis, sensory impression, soliloquy, omniscient description, free indirect style (Friedman, 1955; Humphrey, 1958; Parsons, 2007) as technical devices. These techniques are used to depict areas of consciousness that seem fit to the respective techniques. The Novelists use free association and cinematic devices in any of these technical devices to control “the movement of the stream of consciousness in fiction” (Humphrey, 1958: 43). With regard to technique and style, there are no discernible breaks in the narrative.

This Novel’s focus is on *consciousness*. The psychological unraveling of the characters is of utmost importance to the Novel. In this type of fiction, events and actions are reduced to the bare minimum, are “downplayed... [and] absorbed into the

¹⁸ Dujardin’s *The Bays are Sere* uses similar techniques to those found in the Novel to depict the consciousness of its character while sidelining the events and actions (Friedman, 1955). Therefore it fits the definition. This novel was published three years before the widespread expounding of the concept of stream of consciousness in 1890. How can it be that the modernists represented the Stream, and Dujardin did not, when both parties use similar techniques, aim to represent consciousness, and disregard the importance of a coherent plot? Note that James published the article “On Some Omissions of Introspective Psychology” (which he would later edit to be a part of his *Principles* as the chapter called “The Stream of Consciousness”) in 1884 and it is the first time he talked about the Stream. But it is highly unlikely that Dujardin knew of this article and was (*only* or *mostly*) influenced by this article, *instead of* writing *The Bays are Sere* as a rebellion against the traditional techniques of fiction writing.

¹⁹ See Beach, 1937; Fernald, 2014; Friedman, 1955; Hartley, 1931; Kaye, 2010; Mahaffrey, 2013; Parsons, 2007; Sotirova, 2013 to see how the Novel differs from the traditional realist novel and how the Novel naturally fits in the history of fiction tending to shy away from representing external phenomena, moving toward internal ones.

fabric of consciousness,” (Fernihough, 2007: 70) while psychological phenomena, including imaginations, reminiscences, anticipations, expectations, desires, and overall workings of private and personal consciousness, that is, the psychological lives of the characters, are exposed. The common experience when reading a Novel is that it feels like “nothing happened” except for a few memorable events as if the narrative has no beginnings and endings (Friedman 1955; Sinclair, 1918). This definition is significant in that it alerts us to the possibility that major features of the Novel might not represent the Stream.

My interest here lies with a philosophical problem about representation: what would it take for the Novel, whose features have just been delineated here, to represent the Stream accurately to be rendered as a failure or a success? In order to represent the Stream in writing, the Novelists must overcome three problems: the Incommensurability Problem, the Overarching Problem, and the Anatomical Problem. The Incommensurability Problem asks whether the Stream could somehow be represented in fiction and *still* retain the crucial conceptual features to be called the Stream. The Overarching Problem asks whether the techniques the Novelist uses could ever be used to represent the Stream. The Anatomical Problem asks whether the form of the Stream could ever be followed. Finally, if all fail, then does this mean that the Novel is not a successful one?

3.3. THE INCOMMENSURABILITY PROBLEM

What does it mean to depict the Stream, exactly? Is depicting it different from depicting other human psychological phenomena? Are there any special challenges?

Here, I raise concerns about the Novel, believing that writing *stream* of consciousness fiction is a futile attempt, a lost cause to begin with.

I call the conceptual impossibility of transcribing the Stream into fiction “the Incommensurability Problem.” The Novel and the Stream are two very different ways to convey some features of experience. They are different in nature. The Novel can never catch up with the Stream because the Stream is not something that can be caught up. This problem states that the real nature and the conceptual features of the Stream will necessarily be distorted for the Novelists to transcribe it into writing. In that sense, the one-dimensional style of writing in fiction (and language specifically) can never capture the true nature of the ever-flowing unfolding of conscious states. What is ever-changing and fleeting cannot be captured. One cannot capture what is escaping one’s attention.

To make sure that this problem is peculiar to the concept of the Stream, one must clarify the ways the Stream differs from other psychological phenomena. The difference between other psychological phenomena and the Stream is that the other psychological phenomena are comparatively more clustered, thick, dense incidents that are relatively more static and are situated *within* the Stream themselves. On the other hand, the Stream is ever-flowing, changing, continuous, with interpenetrating moments. That is, *on top of everything else* that the Stream shares with other psychological phenomena, it is ever-changing and continuous, while harboring the other psychological phenomena naturally, as parts of its definition.

The Stream differs from the earlier theories of consciousness and stands on its own in that it highlights the existence and importance of the transitive parts and the fringe.

By virtue of how they are defined, one can grasp that introspection is nearly impossible, especially with respect to these parts of the Stream. Even thinking about trying to stop and analyze one's Stream internally is in strict contrast to how the Stream is defined. The mere attempt to analyze the Stream results in freezing it and analyzing its states. This is conceptually impossible. This problem is of crucial interest to our current purposes as the Novelist should account for this if her work is to be considered as the representation of the Stream. Thus it must be scrutinized.

Once James defines transitive and substantive parts a problem peculiar to the nature of the Stream emerges:

... it is very difficult, introspectively, to see the transitive parts for what they really are. If they are but flights to a conclusion, stopping them to look at them before the conclusion is reached is really annihilating them... Let anyone try to cut a thought across in the middle and get a look at its section, and he will see how difficult the introspective observation of the transitive tracts is. The rush of the thought is so headlong that it almost always brings us up at the conclusion before we can arrest it. Or if our purpose is nimble enough and we do arrest it, it ceases forthwith to be itself. As a snowflake caught in the warm hand is no longer a flake but a drop, so, instead of catching the feeling of relation moving to its term, we find we have caught some substantive thing, usually the last word we were pronouncing, statically taken, and with its function, tendency, and particular meaning in the sentence quite evaporated. *The attempt at introspective analysis in these cases is in fact like seizing a spinning top to catch its motion, or trying to turn up the gas quickly enough to see how the darkness looks* (James, 1981: 236-237; italics added).

Now, notice the dilemma that the Novelist faces: there is the Stream whose elements cannot be stopped to be analyzed since it would be betraying the Stream's nature. On top of that, transitive parts are more prone to be overlooked by the agent, as they are

resistant to introspective observation (Capek, 1950). Since when you attend to the transitive parts, you try to “arrest” them in flight and transfigure them so they are “fixed and crystallized,” like sensory images. Accordingly, “by the very act of introspective focusing [the transitive state’s] real dynamic nature is destroyed” (Capek, 1950: 333). Therefore, *if* the Novelists want to represent the Stream, they have to first stop and analyze the Stream, betraying its true nature, and second account for those transitive parts which we tend to overlook and under-analyze. In order to find a way out of this dilemma, one has to show that either stopping and analyzing the Stream does *not* betray its true nature or the Novelist does not have to stop or halt in order to analyze the Stream.²⁰

3.3.1. TESTIMONIES ACROSS THE LITERATURE

In sum, the Incommensurability Problem states that arresting the Stream to analyze or account for its components to transcribe its content would be betraying its true nature conceptually. This is also corroborated by Bergson (1889/2001: 129) who touches upon this conceptual obstacle by saying that our conscious states assume two forms: “the one clear and precise, but impersonal; the other confused, ever changing, and inexpressible, because *language cannot get hold of it without arresting its mobility* or fit it into its common-place forms without making it into public

²⁰ One might undermine the significance of this problem by saying that the Novelists do not engage in an autobiographical rendering of their own Stream in the Novel. They create fictional characters and unfold their Streams on paper. Then, what Stream exactly does the Incommensurability Problem refer to? That is, one might say that there is no Stream to be represented because the characters are not real entities with psychological lives. This objection might be circumvented if we incorporate the idea that the Novel can be likened to autobiography in one sense: the Novelist must resort to her own conscious unfolding as a model. The problem is now updated to mean that the Novelists, trying to capture the conscious flow of a character, or of *their own*, cannot do so, because the Stream has an ever-flowing nature.

property.” Bergson speculates that the real being is unfit for internal observation (Capek, 1950).

By externalizing and analyzing our conscious states we actually place them in juxtaposition and they become lifeless and impersonal states that lost all their colors. To understand the real nature of consciousness during the development of inner phenomena and the unending evolution of the psychological states, we have to get rid of the notion of external space to the advantage of psychological duration. This is the problem that the Novelists face. By spreading out consciousness in a homogeneous medium and “[expressing] its elements by words,” the Novelists can only present “the shadow” of the real nature of our consciousness (Bergson, 2001: 134).

James and Bergson agree that the apparent discontinuity in the conscious flow results from our tendency to express our consciousness in isolated and mutually exclusive elements of language. The features of conscious reality seem to be mutually external to one another only in the case that they are removed from the temporal experience and conveyed in confined and disparate statements (Capek, 1950).

The Incommensurability Problem is echoed in literary criticism as well. Praz (1972: 94) calls the problem a “paradox” and formulates it as follows:

One couldn’t insist enough on the scientific premises of the stream of consciousness technique. We find ourselves confronted by this paradox: that in their attempts to translate the consciousness of a state of becoming, grasping it as a surprise... the introspective novelists use the most studied, calculated, and deliberate methods at their disposal. In order to render a

mental state as free as possible from controls, they adopt a highly controlled technique which resembles that of science.

Novelist C. S. Lewis (1942/1969: 135-136) belittles the Novel's purpose this way:

The disorganized consciousness which [the Novel] regards as specially real is in fact highly artificial. It is discovered by introspection—that is, by artificially suspending all the normal and outgoing activities of the mind and then attending to what is left. In that residuum it discovers no concentrated will, no logical thought, no morals, no stable sentiments, and (in a word) no mental hierarchy. Of course not; for we have deliberately stopped all these things in order to introspect... It can very easily be shown that the unselective chaos of images and momentary desires which introspection discovers is not the essential characteristic of consciousness. For consciousness is, from the outset, selective, and ceases when selection ceases. Not to prefer any one datum before another, not to attend to one part of our experience at the expense of the rest, is to be asleep: the process of waking, and after that of coming fully awake, consists in bringing selected elements into focus... And even if it were granted (which I do not grant) that the unfocused or unelaborated consciousness were in itself specially real, it would still remain true that literature which claims to represent it is specially unreal. For the very nature of such unfocused consciousness is that it is not attended to. Inattention makes it what it is. The moment you put it into words you falsify it. It is like trying to see what a thing looks like when you are not looking at it.

Another explanation of the problem is as follows: “The spontaneity of the work hardly supports the idea of a preconceived plan” (Hartley, 1931: 82). Here, the problem is said to arise because writing is a planned enterprise. In other words, if writing is a planned enterprise, then how can the Novelists even mimic a supposedly unbroken simultaneous flow in their writing? Joyce (1922/2000b) says he wrote *Ulysses* in seven years, yet it is still considered to be a paradigm in the genre. But fiction writing, a planned enterprise, cannot capture what is ever-flowing. One cannot stop and examine the fleeting states of one's Stream. This is contrary to its exact nature.

3.3.2. CONTINUITY AND THE APPLE

Steinberg (1968: 55) describes the problem as “the difficulty of translating the multi-dimensional real world into language, which is linear.” Elsewhere he states that

Confronted with a stream-of-consciousness passage in a novel, many readers think that the author has presented them with an actual stream of consciousness, the flow of thought and awareness as it occurs from moment to moment in the mind. An examination of what we know of consciousness, thinking, and language, however, indicates that a stream-of-consciousness novelist can at best *simulate* the psychological stream of consciousness. Such an examination also indicates some of the problems facing him when he attempts that simulation (Steinberg, 1960: 423).

Here, I will not delve into the relationship between the production of thought and language. One may still wonder, though, how thought is related to language. And since the Incommensurability Problem is about representing something that flows (the Stream) in static terms (in words), accordingly, one might ask if it is important to consider whether our object of representation (here, the Stream) is made up of words or not, for it to be depicted in words. After all, “apples” are not made up of words in reality, but a novelist can represent them in words successfully.

Consequently, one can wonder why the Novelists cannot represent the Stream (which is not necessarily made up of words) when she can represent an apple (which is definitely not made up of words). The reality as we perceive it is not made up of words. Then, why cannot the Novelists represent the Stream (which is ever-changing, flowing continuously) when they can represent an apple (which does not remain static, which changes as well)?

Remember that the Stream has transitive and substantive parts. By definition, one may ponder and contemplate the substantive parts by holding them before one's mind indefinitely. However, the transitive parts, which "make up a considerable part of" and "possess more importance, significance, and value than the 'substantive parts'" in the Stream (Gurwitsch, 1943: 462), cannot be pondered about without ceasing them and thus destroying the very feature that makes them the *transitive* parts. While comparing representing the apple to representing the Stream, one might consider that the idea of an apple is composed mostly of substantive images. The "static" parts of the apple are considerably more likely to be held in mind to be contemplated, compared to any part of the Stream. And hence, one can contemplate a static image of an apple that is flowing in time, unlike the Stream.

At this stage, one might say that there are other types of incommensurability between reality and its representation in art. For example, realist paintings are done on a two-dimensional medium, but they quite successfully represent the three-dimensional reality on this two-dimensional medium. To represent the dimension that lacks on the canvas and to overcome this incommensurability that is peculiar to painting three-dimensional reality on the two-dimensional surface, realist painters employ the rules of perspective. Then, one might ask, can the Novelists' techniques similarly capture the Stream? This is what I turn to now.

CHAPTER 4: THE OVERARCHING PROBLEM

Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind
in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern,
however disconnected and incoherent in appearance,
which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness.

Virginia Woolf²¹

How might have the Novelists tried to overcome the Incommensurability Problem? In this section, I talk about how the Novelists' techniques did not mainly and solely represent the Stream and I point out the possible influences of associationist, psychoanalytic, and Bergsonian theories of consciousness on the development of the Novel. The Novelists' techniques were not necessarily devised or updated to represent the crucial aspects of the Stream like the transitive parts and the fringe. The resultant techniques of the Novelists represent 1) associationist theories of consciousness, that dominated the philosophy of mind before James (via the use of free association technique influenced by Freud's (and others') methods), 2) the psychological theories like psychoanalysis, depicting and trying to understand the workings of the different levels of consciousness, and 3) Bergsonian psychological duration. The representations of associations, levels of consciousness, and

²¹ (Woolf, 1948: 190)

psychological duration have little to nothing to do with the crucial aspects of the Stream. The literary theorist who labeled the Novel as the stream of consciousness novel should have justified her decision and demonstrated why this Novel is a stream of consciousness novel and not a novel depicting the associationist theories of consciousness, levels of consciousness, and Bergsonian pure duration. That is, in order to call the novel “the *stream* of consciousness novel,” the literary theorist should have demonstrated that the Novel represents *solely* or *mainly* the Stream when compared to, say, the psychoanalytic theories and Bergsonian theories about consciousness, whose emergences in the literature more or less coincide with that of the Stream and which were in vogue in Europe. Not only that associationist theories of consciousness and Bergsonian duration have some drastic differences compared to the Stream, but also they seem to have been represented in the Novel more obviously compared to the Stream. I call this problem “the Overarching Problem.”

4.1. THE ASSOCIATIONISM ARCH

In this section, I argue that the Novelists’ techniques fail to capture the crucial features of the Stream and represent the associationist school of thought.

4.1.1. HUME AND ASSOCIATIONISM

The distinction between association and the Stream is crucial. We may have to compare and contrast how the Stream differs from association to understand the nature of the Stream more properly. James says that the associationist school supports the idea of taking thoughts as discrete and separate. James objected to the associationist school which was inspired by Hume among others. Hume (1960) said

that complex ideas are formed as a result of associating simple ideas which are representations of correspondent sense impressions. The universal laws of association govern thought according to laws of resemblance, contiguity, and cause and effect so that the same simple ideas give rise to others naturally (Hume, 1960).

The associationist psychology assumes that when an object of thought is made up of different elements, the thought has to be made up of that number of ideas, one idea per one element, juxtaposed together, but separate. James (1981: 268) rejects this by saying that whatever thoughts “in relation” must have been thought as a unity, and “there is no manifold of coexisting ideas.”

Remember that, in order to account for the idea that thought is continuous, and without gaps, as opposed to the associationist school, James introduces the concepts of the transitive states and the fringe. These two are among the most important contributions of James to consciousness studies. The transitive states and the fringe make the Stream different from the earlier schools of thought. I argue that the transitive states and the fringe cannot be represented. Therefore the crucial aspects of the Stream cannot be represented, and therefore the Stream cannot be represented in the Novel. Once the transitive parts and the fringe are taken out of the concept of the Stream, then the remaining bits, the substantive parts, can be likened to the conscious states in the associationist school of thought. Therefore, what the Novel represents is conceptually closer to the associationist school of thought than the Stream.

4.1.2. THE NOVEL AND ASSOCIATIONISM

One of the main differences between the traditional novel and the Novel is that the Novelists deliberately attempt to disappear behind their work.²² In order to identify themselves with the fictional character and depict the privacy and personality of consciousness satisfactorily, the Novelists had to adopt some techniques. Among them, the chief one was free association (Humphrey, 1958).

In its most basic form, free association works by “keeping an idea in mind as a starting-point” and letting a “train of thought” that occupies the person’s mind emerge (Freud, 1979: 46-47). One might say that this is exactly what Joyce does in the Molly Bloom chapter:

...a quarter after what an unearthly hour I suppose theyre just getting up in China now combing out their pigtails for the day well soon have the nuns ringing the angelus theyve nobody coming in to spoil their sleep except an odd priest or two for his night office the alarmclock next door at cockshout clattering the brains out of itself let me see if I can doze off 1 2 3 4 5 what kind of lowers are those they invented like the stars the wallpaper in Lombard street was much nicer the apron he gave me was like that something only I only wore it twice better lower this lamp and try again so as I can get up early Ill go to Lambes there beside Findlaters and get them to send us some flowers to put about the place in case he brings him home tomorrow today I mean no no Fridays an unlucky day first I want to do the place up someway the dust grows in it I think while Im asleep then we can have music and cigarettes I can accompany him first I must clean the keys of the piano with milk whatll I wear shall I wear a white rose or those fairy cakes in Liptons I love the smell of a rich big shop at 7 1/2d a lb or the other ones with the cherries in them and the pinky sugar 11d a couple of lbs of course a nice plant for the middle of the table Id get that cheaper in wait wheres this I saw them not long ago I love flowers Id love to have the whole place swimming in roses God of heaven theres nothing like nature the wild mountains then the sea and the waves rushing then the beautiful country with fields of oats and wheat and all kinds of things and all the fine cattle

²² Joyce (1916/2000a: 181) had vouched for this: “The artist, like the God of the creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails.”

going about that would do your heart good to see rivers and lakes and flowers all sorts of shapes and smells and colours springing up even out of the ditches primroses and violets nature it is as for them saying theres no God I wouldnt give a snap of my two fingers for all their learning... (Joyce, 2000b: 930-931).

In fact, Humphrey (1958) breaks down this excerpt in terms of its free association technique and analyzes how Molly's thoughts seem to be associated with one another via anticipations, reminiscences, and imaginations. Goldman (1960: 77) claims that even though this passage looks incoherent and disorderly, "a second reading shows a carefully planned association of thought." Moreover, Humphrey (1958: 48) claims that "all stream-of-consciousness fiction is greatly dependent on the principles of free association," including Richardson's and Woolf's.²³

So, the Novelists tried to model the flow of thought with the help of associations, using the technique Humphrey (1958) calls "psychological free association." However, just as its label suggests, the free association technique can only be useful in presenting the successive, linear, ordered, and *separate* thoughts that are the remnants of the associationist school of thought. The literary theorist who uses the label "the stream of consciousness" for Novels which mainly use free association to render the directed thinking of its characters, should be able to illustrate why what the Novelists represent is a representation of the *stream* of consciousness, and not the unfolding of consciousness according to rules of association. That is, the literary theorist should first acknowledge that the Stream is conceptually different from earlier associationist views about consciousness and second, she should be able to

²³ Roetto (2019) claims that *Mrs Dalloway* has free association technique.

argue for why this Novel is a representation of the Stream and not (only) the associationist school's views about consciousness. For, linear directed association that is (perhaps inescapably) used by the Novelists cannot do justice to the *halo*, the *fringe*, the dim that surrounds the thinking which had been insistently highlighted by James. What is represented by free association would, at best, be some separate thoughts associatively brought together to form a unified representation of consciousness. However, this is what James directly objects to.

4.1.3. THE TRANSITIVE STATES AND THE FRINGE

Remember that for James, the substantive parts of the Stream can be taken before the mind for an indefinite amount of time to be contemplated, but the fringe and the transitive parts escape our deliberate attention. This is the nature of the Stream, it highlights the existence and importance of the fringe and the transitive parts which had not been accounted for by earlier schools of philosophy of mind. The fringe is tightly bound to "the directed thinking," coloring and changing it. What we know as the directed thought is "steeped and dyed in the free water that flows round it" (James, 1981: 246).

The fringe and the transitive parts are what make the Stream different from the earlier schools of thought. In fact, when you leave them out, you are left with the substantive parts, the parts of our thought that are filled with sensorial images, which are basically equivalent to how the associationist school conceives thought. So, the transitive parts and the fringe must be just as important as the substantive parts for

James (and perhaps more important in *coloring* the present state or directing the thought).

Remember that the Incommensurability Problem stated that since by definition the transitive parts and the fringe are conceptually unattainable, it is impossible to represent them in writing. That is the case with the Novel. Consider the exemplary passage from *Ulysses* again. Humphrey (1958) analyzes the free association technique Joyce uses in this passage. The nearby clock impinges on Molly's consciousness, it leads her to think about what time it must be in China, this leads to thinking about how late the time is, then how late her husband arrived. Then she deliberately tries to anticipate how the events in the morning will take place. Doing so, the wallpaper with a floral pattern catches her attention. This leads her to reminisce about a dress that also had a floral pattern. The dress, then, reminds her of her husband because it was he who gave it to her. Then as she lowers the bedside lamp, she is reminded that she has to get up early and she imagines the next day.

At face value, the external stimuli that direct the thought might look like representations of the fringes of Molly's thought. However, notice how the passage is inescapably constructed as an alternating sequence of successive imagery. There is nothing in the text that would suggest that this is a representation of the fringes of the stream of consciousness *instead of* a representation of associative consciousness. The fringes, the transitive parts, and the substantive parts do not come together associatively. They all come as one, as unified. And without seeing clear representations of the fringe and the transitive parts, one cannot call this Novel a

stream of consciousness novel. The Stream is rich because it makes us aware of this halo that surrounds our immediate conscious states, our present maximally excited thoughts. And in the Novel, it is quite impossible to successfully depict this concept of halo without successively alternating between different thoughts that ultimately come together via free association technique.

Association operates by associating two *separate* “things,” be it ideas, or thoughts. So when the Novelists proceed by associating one thought of their characters with another thought, they already assume that these thoughts are *separate*. They already assume that the second thought comes after the first one (after the first one is finished). And then, they introduce the second one (after the first one is necessarily finished). The Novelists may have tried to overcome this by cutting the first thought short, without it being finished, and representing this “cut” by spaces, ellipses, and dashes so that the successive thoughts seem overlapping. At face value, this method seems to eliminate the problem of representing the intertwined states (or thoughts). But then, this immediately faces another problem with the Stream’s *continuity*. For James, the Stream does have *no* gaps, it is never “cut” abruptly. Thought does not have breaks or stops, it just feels like it does. So, trying to unite successive thoughts with truncated sentences, stops, halts, and varied punctuation marks cannot capture the essence of the Stream.

That is not to say that James denies the existence of associations in our consciousness. What he tries to highlight is that they are not constitutive parts of the Stream. According to James, associations can only be made *retrospectively*, after the

Stream comes *as a whole*. Inescapably, the Novelists do first, what they would have done later. That is, the order of the emergence of the Stream as a whole and breaking it down to parts via associations is necessarily *reversed* in the Novel.

Free association can only capture what the Stream *feels* like. One might say that when reading it, the Novel *feels* like it presents the flow of thought of its characters, and therefore it can produce an effect of overall continuity and movement. As Sinclair (1918: 58) had commented, the Novel is about “life going on and on.” But the Novel can only achieve a feeling of continuity by juxtaposing the substantive states together as a train of thought. That is, the Novel can represent a *feeling* of flow. But this feeling of flow might just as well be a representation of how associationist school conceives of thought. How conscious life *felt like* had already been investigated by the associationist school before the concept of the Stream was introduced. That is, the Novel may represent how thought is continuous in a Humean manner that considers the mind as “a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity... in a perpetual *flux* and *movement*,” (Hume, 1960: 252, italics added), as a “kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, re-pass, glide away, and mingle...” (Hume, 1960: 253). Then it seems as though, some of this Novel’s main techniques represent consciousness as still pertaining to the earlier schools of thought. That is because the way they convey the feeling of flow is closer to the associationist school than the Stream since the resultant work is a perpetual flow of associatively directed thinking, not a representation of the Stream.

I argue that in order to represent the Stream, the Novelists must have represented its crucial and distinguishing features, the transitive states and the fringe. But in order to argue that the transitive parts and the fringe must be represented in the Novel for the Novel to be best read as a representation of the Stream, one also has to defend that these are, in fact, crucial features of the Stream. And this is certainly the case.

As Bailey (1999: 151) argues, the transitive parts are “a large, varied and important part of our mental reality.” The earlier associationist school of thought was unduly emphasizing the substantive states, and they were unable to account for the existence of the transitive states. Transitive states cannot be investigated for what they are, before focusing on them. And by definition, focusing on them would be annihilating them, because focusing means ceasing, and ceasing turns the transitive parts into substantive parts. So, “to ask the proponent of transitive parts to *produce* them is unfair” (Bailey, 1999: 145).

The transitive parts, Bailey (1999) argues, are shunned from linguistic analysis because their content cannot be intellectually accessed via linguistic analysis. They are parts of thought that are vague, indescribable, and imageless. But then, how can the Novelists represent something basically imageless and contentless? As Gurwitsch (1943: 458) puts it, transitive states are

mental states from which all imagery either of words or things is absent, and for which it is impossible to account as long as consciousness is assumed to be composed, on the one hand, of sensations and on the other hand, of ideas, representations, and images of a perfectly definite nature.

Similarly, the fringe is not composed of sensorial images (Bailey, 1999). But it is crucial for James because it directs where the maximally excited thought goes and denotes from where it comes. The difference between the fringe and the transitive parts is that the former are an *aspect* of the substantive parts while the latter are “fast-moving *segments of subjective time*” (Bailey, 1999: 149). In sum, the transitive states and the fringe are situated in the Stream so that “between all their substantive elements there is ‘transitive’ consciousness, and the words and images are ‘fringed,’ and not as discrete as to a careless view they seem” (James, 1981: 262). And more importantly, as this last quote might illustrate, when you leave the fringe and the transitive parts out, you end up with atomistic substantive parts that are composed of sensorial imagery, a very Humean way of thinking about our mental life.

In this sense, the association problem looks as if it is also insurmountable. The Novelists cannot proceed to depict the directed thought of the characters without devising some kind of an association scheme, but then, this is in stark contrast to what the Stream tries to convey about the true nature of the unfolding of our consciousness. The Stream is more than the associative directed thought. While the directed thought can be represented as an interior monologue, the Stream is conceptually different. It is a whole, it comes whole. It can only be differentiated from other schools of thought via the transitive parts and the fringe, the parts which I argued cannot be represented. To redeem the Novelists, one must argue that the technique they use in their writing to depict consciousness is *not* association, but this requires a huge reconstruction of how we interpret and describe the techniques of fiction, and hence does not seem plausible.

Otherwise, one might insist that representation in arts, might not dictate direct replication. That is, representation might still work even if the representative artwork does not directly match the represented object.²⁴ This is a plausible idea because “matching is so difficult both to achieve and to ascertain” (Walton, 1990: 111). For example, we might say that Picasso’s Cubist paintings represent human figures no matter how distorted they seem. In the case of the representation of the Stream in fiction, one might argue that the representations of the fringe and the transitive states are not necessary since representation can still succeed without complete matching. However, “representing without matching is simply misrepresentation” (Walton, 1990: 108), especially with the Stream because when there is no matching between the Novel and the Stream, what is represented in the Novel risks being closer to the associationist views about how consciousness unfolds than the Stream. “There must be *some* correspondence between representations and their objects” (Walton, 1990: 112), and in the case of representing the Stream, I argue that this correspondence should take into account the fringe and the transitive parts because otherwise there would be nothing in the text that would suggest that the Novel is a representation of the Stream and not the associationist views.

This arch of the Overarching Problem states that the Novelists proceed along to supposedly create the stream of consciousness of their characters by associating the characters’ thoughts and external stimuli with each other. This is in stark contrast to

²⁴ Here, “‘matching’ is the *complete* correspondence between a representation and something in the world” (Walton, 1990: 108).

James's view. James allows associations to exist in our Stream but *only* to be discovered retrospectively. Here, one might say that, like James, we retrospectively *decode* the associations later in the Novel. However, this does not change the fact that the associations were planned by the author when she was moving forward with her work. So the backward decoding (or making sense) of the Stream to find out the associations clashes with the forward creation of the characters' "streams" in the Novel. The Novel is inevitably (and quite expectedly) artificial regarding associations. Then this brings us back again to the initial question of whether representing the Stream in fiction is ever possible.

Finally, given that the Novel uses free association as one of the primary techniques to control the movement of the Stream, in conjunction with other techniques like direct interior monologue and sensory impression, what is the Novel's relationship to its techniques? Is the Novel the sum of its techniques? If it is, then the Novel cannot be a *stream* of consciousness novel since the techniques do not represent the *Stream* by themselves. If not, then what makes the Novel a "*stream* of consciousness" novel besides the techniques it uses to represent the Stream? In these Novels, associations and impressions *direct* the so-called stream of the characters. Although associations and sensory impressions *are* parts of the Stream, the Stream is definitely *more* than the combinations of these, and this is what makes the Stream unique, original, and groundbreaking as a theory of consciousness.

Now, remember the painter who successfully represents the three-dimensional reality on the two-dimensional surface with the help of some perspectival drawing

techniques. In this subsection, I argued that this line of argument would not work for the Novelists since their chief technique, the free association technique, cannot capture the crucial aspects of the Stream, and can only be used to represent associative ways of thinking about consciousness.

4.2. THE LEVELS OF CONSCIOUSNESS ARCH

The Novel is famous for depicting every level of consciousness. In fact, Humphrey (1958: 2-3) declares that “stream-of-consciousness fiction differs from all other psychological fiction precisely in that it is concerned with those levels [of consciousness] that are more inchoate than rational verbalization.” When the Novelists leave their omniscient position and delve into the mind of the character, they notice that there are varying levels of consciousness including full awareness (or the margin of attention), preconsciousness, subconsciousness, and unconsciousness. James, as an empirical psychologist, was very wary of talking about the “new” empirical studies regarding the levels of consciousness that can only be reached under hypnotic or trance states. We understand that these levels are the preconscious, the subconscious, and the margin of sleep. James did not incorporate the levels of consciousness besides the margin of attention in his theory of the stream of consciousness. And for this, he was criticized by both Richardson and Sinclair who said that

the definitional problem of stream of consciousness [as a philosophical psychology theory] is that as a phrase to describe the movements of thought it does not account for the complexity of a *multi-layered consciousness*, and when applied to literature it doesn’t then describe what techniques are being used to represent complexity (Bowler & Drewery, 2020: 6; italics added).

Sinclair (1917: 81) in particular said that “a stream of consciousness... cannot have periods or even moments of unconsciousness without ceasing to exist.” That is to say, the stream of consciousness does not account for the multi-layered nature of consciousness. So it is unreasonable and faulty to label a genre of fiction, that is famous for eliminating authorial control by descending to the level of the character and depicting the rich layers of consciousness, “the stream of consciousness” since the Stream does not have relevant features to have influenced the Novelists to venture into the various levels of consciousness. The literary theorist should have demonstrated how a genre of fiction that deals with various levels of consciousness represents the Stream and not other psychological theories, like psychoanalysis, which explicitly mention and try to detail the workings of several levels of consciousness.²⁵ This suggests that the concept of the Stream was not that influential a concept for fiction to bring about a new genre called “the *stream* of consciousness” novel.

4.3. THE HENRI BERGSON ARCH

A special subsection should be devoted to Henri Bergson.²⁶ Some investigated in what ways the Novelists might have been influenced by Bergson’s theories of psychological duration, self, intuition, the creative impulse, the nature of time and its relation to space, being versus becoming, the interpenetration of conscious states,

²⁵ Sinclair herself might be excused because she only labeled Richardson’s three Novels. In those Novels, Richardson does not venture into the subconscious and the unconscious of her character. Here, the later literary theorists who deemed the label suitable for Woolf’s and Joyce’s Novels, which definitely venture into the subconscious and the unconscious, must be held responsible.

²⁶ Richardson denied having ever read Bergson (Parsons, 2007). Woolf must have been familiar with his work (Fernihough, 2007), as she attended at least one of her sister-in-law Karin Costelloe-Stephen’s presentations on Bergson. Stephen was an influential figure as to how Bergson’s work was conceived in Britain (Vrahimis, 2020).

and memory (Bowler, 2020; Friedman, 1955; Kumar, 1960; Kumar, 1961; Kumar, 1963; Parsons, 2007).²⁷

Bergsonian conception about how consciousness unfolds bears some resemblance to the Stream. Furthermore, James and Bergson knew of each other's work (Capek, 1950). Bergson (2001) underlined that pure, heterogeneous, and qualitative duration is a different entity from the homogeneous and quantitative space. He purported that conscious states unfold in and constitute duration. In space, co-existing terms remain distinct and they are juxtaposed. Whereas in duration, co-existing terms form an organic whole. Although conscious states, including sensations, feelings, and ideas, feel like they succeed each other, and although they are distinct, they *permeate* one another. They are perceived *in* one another, forming a living being. They are interconnected and mutually penetrating one another. However, we tend to represent conscious states in space, and mistakenly perceive that they occupy distinct places, no longer permeating each other.

In reality, one cannot untangle the intermingled conscious states, cannot tell “whether they are one or several, nor even examine them... *without altering their nature*” (Bergson, 2001: 137; italics added). At the extreme, for Bergson, even saying that these states “encroach on one another” would still bear the idea of distinguishing them from one another. The idea of pure duration gives rise to the difference between

²⁷ Bergson's “principle of complete identification between the artist and his subject” (Kumar, 1960: 327) must be one of his most obvious contributions to the literary genre, as the modern novelists, more often than not, tried to disappear behind their work, to “give a direct quotation of the mind” (Bowling, 1950: 345). Sinclair (1918: 58) said of Richardson that by “identifying herself with [the life of her characters]... [she becomes] the first [to get] closer to reality than any of our novelists who are trying so desperately to get close.”

psychological duration and mathematical time. Pure duration, that is constituted by the conscious states, is not something that can be divided into equal segments and measured, unlike mathematical time and space, whose elements reside mutually external to one another.

Then, the literary theorist who labeled the Novel “the stream of consciousness” novel should have demonstrated why some huge portions of the Novel are representations of the Stream and *not* representations of the difference between pure duration and mathematical time. Because the modernist writer’s attempt to represent psychological reality from the inside and undermine the prevalence of the earlier realist novels that depended on the depictions of external reality, coincide with Bergson’s distinction between psychological and mathematical time. For example, in *Mrs Dalloway* and *Ulysses*, both of which take place in one day, the Novelists devote many pages to a happening which could have lasted only a few instants. Each episode of *Ulysses* corresponds to one hour of the day and takes up 50 pages on average. Similarly, it takes more than 10 pages for Clarissa Dalloway to walk across the street in the opening pages of *Mrs Dalloway*. The earlier realist novel would have devoted a few lines to these kinds of passages that focus on mental depictions and that do not correspond much to external events. The Novelists’ playfulness with the notion of time cannot be attributed to any attempt at representing the Stream because the Jamesian Stream is purely a psychological theory whereas the Bergsonian duration attempts to give an account of reality in terms of a metaphysical theory about both how consciousness unfolds and correspondingly how real time is perceived. The Novelists’ tendency to represent psychological reality through its

relationship to the metaphysical understanding of time must be closer to Bergsonian pure duration since the Jamesian Stream does not venture into our perception of time.²⁸ Bergson himself strictly contrasted his metaphysical account of duration to the solely psychological theory of the stream of consciousness by James (Capek, 1950).

Therefore, the literary theorist who saw “the stream of consciousness” label fit for this genre of fiction should have accounted for why this Novel is best read as a representation of the Stream, and not the notions of the psychological and mathematical time. If Sinclair had originally tried to excite the realist critic’s interest in Richardson’s novels by referring to Bergson’s theories about consciousness instead of the Stream, the label might have fared better since the Novel is actually conceptually closer to Bergson’s theories about consciousness.

²⁸ Additionally, unlike the Stream, Bergson reconciles associationist views with his theory of consciousness. For Bergson (2001), when one travels into the “deeper” levels of consciousness, multiple conscious states get more blended and intermingled with each other. While at the deeper levels of consciousness the states interpenetrate each other, at the outer levels of consciousness, they adhere to the laws of association. Although Bergson still thinks that associationists are wrong in that they try to construct a conscious state by trying to add up other distinct conscious states, the Novelists’ appeal to associations to explore the consciousness of their characters does not seem to have as violating a nature as it has with the Stream.

CHAPTER 5: THE ANATOMICAL PROBLEM

5.1. REPRESENTATION AND THE FORM

One can argue that *representing* the Stream in writing might necessitate representing the Stream's *form*. So one might say that the Novel represents the Stream's form.²⁹ Then, unless one deliberately claims that these two references of the same concept are independent and the labeling is merely coincidental, one would expect a "stream of consciousness" novel to trace the movement, to approximate the form of the "stream of consciousness" in philosophical psychology. I suggest we address the issue in the following manner. James saw it fit to use the river as a flowing body of water to illustrate the continuity and changing nature of consciousness since the river as a flowing body of water is also continuous and changing. It is easy to see that the river is self-similar and the Novel has a self-similar form. One might then say that the Novel approximates the form of the river as a flowing body of water. However, it is doubtful whether the Stream is self-similar or not. This is what I turn to now.

5.2. THE SELF-SIMILAR FORM OF THE NOVEL

Assuming that the river analogy is apt for the concept of the stream of consciousness, let us now imagine a river. This is a river that is a stand-in for a flowing body of

²⁹ It is not unreasonable to expect representation to be reconciled with formalism in philosophy of art. For example, "most representational paintings have formal aesthetic features among their other aesthetic features" (Zangwill, 2009: 293).

water. Consider magnifying into a portion of the river. Call this a “first-order magnified portion.” Compare this portion to the whole river. Ideally, you will see that the first-order magnified portion is similar in shape and content to the whole river, that the first-order magnified portion is flowing effortlessly just like the whole river. Then, compare this first-order magnified portion to several other possible first-order magnified portions of the river. You will see that all are similar in shape and content. Furthermore, you can magnify into a first-order magnified portion and arrive at a “second-order magnified portion.” Compare this second-order magnified portion to the whole river, to the first-order magnified portion(s), and to other second-order magnified portions. In fact, you might even go to the Nth-order magnified portion with N approaching infinity.³⁰ You will see that all are similar in shape and content. Therefore the river is “self-similar” in shape and content.

I define “self-similarity” as the feature of the form of the river through which you can compare and contrast different Nth-order magnified portions of the river with each other, with the whole river, and with Mth-order (where M is different from N) magnified portions, and still arrive at the same sense of flow (in shape and content). You will see that no matter how much you magnify into any portion, the Nth-order magnified portions will also be similar to the $(N+1)$ st-order and $(N-1)$ st-order magnified portions.

³⁰ We venture into the second-order magnified portions to illustrate that the flow is conserved how much you magnify into the river, up to the point where you hit the underlying H_2O molecules. At the molecular level, you would see discrete H_2O molecules that do not constitute a flow.

The Novel also has a self-similar structure. Suppose that the whole text *Pointed Roofs* depicts a whole flow of consciousness.³¹ The self-similarity concept states that any magnified portion of the text should be similar in shape, style, and content to the whole text and to any other portion of the text. Let a first-order magnified portion be the following:

When Miriam woke the next morning she lay still with eyes closed. She had dreamed that she had been standing in a room in the German school and the staff had crowded round her, looking at her. They had dreadful eyes — eyes like the eyes of hostesses she remembered, eyes she had seen in trains and ‘buses, eyes from the old school. They came and stood and looked at her, and saw her as she was, without courage, without funds or good clothes or beauty, without charm or interest, without even the skill to play a part. They looked at her with loathing. ‘Board and lodging — privilege to attend Masters’ lectures and laundry (body-linen only).’ That was all she had thought of and clutched at — all along, since first she read the Fräulein’s letter. Her keep and the chance of learning... and Germany — Germany, das deutsche Vaterland— Germany, all woods and mountains and tenderness — Hermann and Dorothea in the dusk of a happy village.

And it would really be those women, expecting things of her. They would be so affable at first. She had been through it a million times — all her life— all eternity. They would smile those hateful women’s smiles — smirks — self-satisfied smiles as if everybody were agreed about everything. She loathed women. They always smiled. All the teachers had at school, all the girls, but Lilla. Eve did... maddeningly sometimes... Mother... it was the only funny horrid thing about her. Harriett didn’t.... Harriett laughed. She was strong and hard somehow... (Richardson, 1915/1921: 12-13).

You would see that this portion is a representation of the unfolding of Miriam’s consciousness in free indirect style or indirect analysis.³² Then take any other first-order magnified portion of the text. Let it be the following:

‘Oh, thanks,’ said Miriam, in general. She could not meet anyone’s eye. The coffee cups were being slid up to Gertrude’s end of the table and rapidly filled by her. Gertrude, of course, she noticed had contrived to look dashing and smart. Her hair, with the exception of some wild ends that hung round

³¹ The same would also work best with *Mrs Dalloway* and the Molly Bloom section of *Ulysses*. In fact, at first glance, the Molly Bloom section, a bulk with no breaks and no punctuations, might be seen as an attempt to approximate the form of the Stream as continuously flowing without any breaks.

³² Parsons (2007: 31) calls Richardson’s primary technique “an extreme version of free indirect narrative technique,” whereas for Friedman (1955) it is “internal analysis.”

her face was screwed loosely on the top of her head and transfixed with a dagger-like tortoise-shell hair ornament —like a Japanese— Indian —no, Maori— that was it, she looked like a New Zealander. Clara and Minna had fastened up theirs with combs and ribbons and looked decent —frauish though, thought Miriam. Judy wore a plait. Without her fuzzy cloud she looked exactly like a country servant, a farmhouse servant. She drank her coffee noisily and furtively —she looked extraordinary, thought Miriam, and took comfort. The Martins’ brown bows appeared on their necks instead of cresting their heads —it improved them, Miriam thought. What regular features they had. Bertha looked like a youth —like a musician. Her hair was loosened a little at the sides, shading the corners of her forehead and adding to its height. It shone like marble, high and straight. Emma’s hair hung round her like a shawl. ‘Lisbeth, Gretchen... what was that lovely German name... hild... Brunhilde... (Richardson, 1921: 88-89).

The first portion of the text is similar in shape, style, and content to the second one. Furthermore, when you magnify into any first-order magnified portion, you would also see that the second-order magnified portion is similar to the first-order magnified portion it belongs to and to any other portion.³³ The result of the second magnification should represent a flow of thought as well.³⁴ Therefore, magnifying into a portion of a “stream of consciousness” text, and comparing that portion, 1) to other portions, 2) to the whole text, and 3) to second-order magnified pieces would eventually demonstrate that the text holds a significant form that can be labeled as “self-similar.” Notice that we already established that a river has a self-similar structure. Then, according to the self-similarity argument, the Novel must be a successful artwork because it has a significant form representing the form of the concept it supposedly represents.

³³ Up to the point where you hit individual words which are not in sentences. At the word-level, you would see discrete words that can never represent a flow of thought. Refer to Footnote 30.

³⁴ An interesting philosophical question arises: How much can you magnify into a portion of the text so that the end-product you have *still* represents a flow? That is, what are the criteria for a bunch of sentences coming together to constitute a flow? How far can you go magnifying into the text so that the pieces still retain their characteristics of flow?

5.3. THE RIVER ANALOGY REVISITED

But... There is an immediate concern about the self-similarity argument. The Novel might have a significant form to it that can be called “the self-similar” form. The river seems to have this form as well. *But the Stream does not.* If the Stream has a peculiar form to it, then that must be *formlessness*. The self-similarity is not necessarily the form of the *Stream*, it is the form of the *river*, upon which the river analogy is based. This is merely an analogy. And when you consider the self-similarity argument, the analogy between the Stream and the river fails because no part of the Stream is necessarily alike to its total, whereas any magnified part of the river is necessarily alike to its total. Hence, the self-similar form of the Novel does not follow the formless unfolding of conscious states. In that sense, from a formalist perspective, we must conclude that the Novel is unsuccessful with respect to its representative qualities. Hence, even if the significant “self-similar” form of the Novel might be a reason in itself for us to decide that it is a good artwork, “self-similarity” is not related to the Stream’s form and hence the supposed representation of the Stream in the Novel is again tenuous. Because the Stream is not necessarily self-similar.

5.4. THE FOREIGN FORMS OF THE NOVEL

Humphrey (1958) and Friedman (1955) illustrate several significant forms of the Novel. For example, *Ulysses* follows the structure of Homer’s *Odyssey*, the shape of Viconian Cycles, some structures in classical music (Friedman, 1955). But finding the significant form(s) of *Ulysses* contributes nothing to our understanding of how

Joyce might have tried to represent the Stream. It only highlights a then-contemporary understanding of art whose primary focal point is the form.³⁵

By definition, if it were ever possible, a pure stream of consciousness novel might be very boring or tiresome to read due to the unavailability of a coherent plot, the inability to follow or knit together the seemingly detached psychological phenomena, the inability to trail or keep in mind the sequence of the scant number of events, the detailed and interwoven psychological unfolding of the characters, and the unceasing journey into the psychological depths of the character(s). But why did the Novelists force foreign forms when representing something that is essentially formless? Compulsory processes in writing fiction like editing, revising, reforming, superimposing a form on what is essentially formless for the sake of literary unity are naturally in opposition to what the Stream tries to convey. The alien form of the Novel is only for the readers' sake so that they are not lost in something that cannot be represented conceptually. But once a foreign form is superimposed on the Novel, then the "true" nature of the Stream is inevitably distorted. Hence, the Novelists who attend to form would accidentally err. This is echoed in Friedman (1955) who states that the machinery and the technical presentation of the Novelists are very elaborate, but inevitably *too contrived*.³⁶

³⁵ For example, Roger Fry, an acquaintance of Woolf was a prominent figure in the early 20th century thinking about art (Payne, 1987). Fry, and Clive Bell were the most prominent 20th-century formalists. They believed that all of an artwork's "aesthetic properties are formal; they are all determined solely by" attending to the formal aspects of the work, and not to its "history of production" (Zangwill, 2009: 291).

³⁶ *If* the successful rendition of the Stream into the Novel depends on featuring the Stream's formal characteristics, maybe Richardson is *more* successful than Joyce and Woolf because she does not impose a form, or an elaborate structure, to something essentially formless, to support the texture of her work.

In this sense, something one would not necessarily consider to be an artwork, such as a diary entry written in interior monologue, seems to reflect the true nature of the Stream better than the Novel, since the journal entry is less edited, is unplanned, and it meddles less with the structure of the Stream by not aiming to impose a form to something mainly formless. Thus, a journal entry with its ill-formed structure, its scribbles and doodles, and without a superimposed foreign form might be more in line with the true nature of the Stream, compared to the Novel. For example, Joyce's manuscripts for *Ulysses* seem to capture *his* flow of thought well since they do not have foreign forms imposed on them and since they are supposedly unmediated, unedited, and uninterrupted flow of his directed thought. That is, in the journal entry the unfolding of the simultaneous thought is represented better. Obviously, you would still be unable to grasp the true nature of the transitive parts and the fringe, or you would still be unable to represent the intermingling of your conscious states in a journal entry in a way other than associatively, but it would be more successful in representing the true nature of the Stream since it is going to be a near-simultaneous entry, and since you will not have imposed a foreign form to submit it to some literary conventions. The journal entry will be one step closer to depicting the psychological stream of its author because it will have at least one stratum less of intrusion, that is, the editing part of writing, or other literary concerns to fit the writing to some structures to increase "readability."

5.5. DISTORTION OF THE FORM AND THE NOVEL

Meanwhile, one might say that some artworks must distort the form of what they are trying to depict, to make it more presentable and accessible to the audience. For

example, a sculpture on a high-level pedestal (like Nelson's Column commemorating Horatio Nelson) might seem like it possesses the exact dimensions of what it tries to depict when you look at it from the ground. But when one takes the sculpture down, one might see that its dimensions are actually highly distorted and it does not have anything to do with the dimensions of what it tries to depict. It was made this way bearing in mind the effect of perspective. So, one might say that distorting the form is sometimes necessary, and even *inherent* when producing the artworks, to account for the features of the audience's experience, like their spatial standpoints and the corresponding angles from which they look at the sculpture that constitute their perspectives. In this manner, distortion (or deception) is inherent to art. For example, Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres was famous for distorting the anatomical structure of his figures in painting, disregarding anatomical imitation, and playing with the number of vertebrae (Lee, 2010). His *La Grande Odalisque* (1814) features a representation of an odalisque, a female slave in a harem. Ingres distorts the figure's anatomical proportions beyond the plausible limits for it to retain verisimilitude. He reportedly achieved this "by favoring elongated lines and curvature," aiming to increase the degree of sensuality eluded from the representation of the body in question (Katz, 2014: 225).

Likewise, distorting the true nature of the Stream might be necessary for the Novelists to account for the different aspects of the reader's experience (including perspective) and convey the artist's diverse aims other than imitation. However, notice that in this objection with the sculpture, distortion is something *deliberate*. The sculptor knowingly, intentionally, purposefully distorts the shape of what she

tries to imitate. If distorting the form is inherent to art, then this here is a deliberate effort on part of the sculptor.

In contrast, there is no *distortion* of the form of the Stream in the Novel, there is *unattainability*. Remember that the Incommensurability Problem arises because the flow is unattainable. Conscious states are ephemeral, they “vaporize” before you can even glimpse at them. Even the substantive states will undergo severe changes, leaving only traces of their initial nature, when you try to hold them before your mind and contemplate them. Hence, the Novelists do not distort the form of something they can grasp. They cannot attain the form of the Stream ever if the Stream has a form to it.

There is a compromise between making the Novel more appealing to the literary canons by adopting a certain style and representing the true nature of the Stream. The more stylish the Novel is, the less it resembles the Stream. One might wonder what the optimal point is, then, which adheres to both literary conventions and the true nature of the Stream. Or is there ever such a point where you can represent or reproduce the Stream in the Novel, without compromising the Stream’s true nature? I conclude that the Novel would inescapably distort the real nature of the Stream.

CHAPTER 6: THROW THE NOVEL OUT THE WINDOW

6.1. A NEW LABEL

We will have to label the genre anew. This would make us get closer to the approximation of the “real” nature of both the Novel and the Stream. It would allow us to approximate the “real” nature of the Stream by eliminating the Stream’s wrongful representations in mediums other than philosophical psychology. This is crucial because the so-called stream of consciousness novel makes it look like the associative flow of thought it represents can ever be a plausible representation of the stream of consciousness as purported by James. However, the Incommensurability, the Overarching, and the Anatomical Problems are so pervasive conceptual problems regarding the peculiar nature of the Stream that it is best if we do not call this Novel “the *stream* of consciousness” novel.

Here, one might ask whether the name of a genre *must* reflect what the Novel is about or not. If the genre does not have an appropriate label, the misnomer can have adverse effects on the concept. Here, the so-called stream of consciousness novel inadvertently endorses the idea that the Stream is likely to be made up of distinct atomistic thoughts coming together via associations since the Novel proceeds in that manner. The misnomer here poses the risk for the reader, and probably the literary

theorist, to interpret the Stream as being composed of associations, with no possible representation of the fringe and the transitive parts. It is better if the label of the genre has appropriate connotations regarding the content of the Novel. Otherwise, it looks as if the Novel is a representation of the philosophical stream of consciousness when it is not.

Unquestionably, the so-called stream of consciousness novel of the mid-1910s to early 1930s uses the character's consciousness as a medium or screen to unfold the scarce events, interpret the situations the character is in, convey the reminiscences of the character, record the fleeting impressions that are instilled on the character's mind. Basically, the principal actor of the Novel is the consciousness unfolding through the pages. The Novelists make use of associationism to direct the thought patterns of the character. The use of associationism directly conflicts with what James was trying to convey about the nature of consciousness, about the *stream* of consciousness. Thence, I believe we should use alternative names for the stream of consciousness novel so that the genre label *matches* the genre content. The stream of consciousness novel had alternatively been called "the modernist novel," "the psychological novel" (Parsons, 2007), or "the novel of consciousness" (Sotirova, 2013). All have appropriate connotations considering the Novel's content. In addition, I propose that the label "the associative impressionistic novel" can also be used to designate the Novel, since the Novelist makes use of free *associations* to direct the thoughts of the character and render her *impressions* while unfolding her consciousness. It is impressionistic because it involves the depiction of the "uncensored" and mostly "untouched" rendering of the sense impressions.

To conclude, we might say that the so-called stream of consciousness novel can at best be a mixture of literary techniques and representations of several psychological theories about consciousness. It is a natural landmark in the literary history of attempts at representing consciousness. It can at best be a combined effort of several modernist authors being influenced by various literary movements, psychological and philosophical theories, and other artistic branches such as music and film. I conclude that we should see the genre in question not as an attempt at representing the Stream in fiction, but as an educated and informed step in the history of fiction by knowledgeable novelists to capture the modern reality more accurately from the “subjective” *inside* rather than the “objective” *outside*, which was the way the traditional realist novel went. I consider this conclusion as a reason why the representation of the Stream in the Novels in question should not be used as a criterion to judge their worth as artworks.

6.2. WHAT NOW?

In 1889, more than two decades prior to the emergence of the stream of consciousness novel, prior to the literary battle between the Edwardians H. G. Wells, Arnold Bennett, and John Galsworthy; and the Georgians Woolf and Joyce, among others (Woolf, 1924), Bergson (2001: 133-134) had expected that

...if some bold novelist, tearing aside the cleverly woven curtain of our conventional ego, shows us under this appearance of logic a fundamental absurdity, under this juxtaposition of simple states an infinite permeation of a thousand different impressions which have already ceased to exist the instant they are named, we commend him for having known us better than we knew ourselves... [If the Novelist can] make us suspect the extraordinary and illogical nature of the object which projects it; he has

made us reflect by giving outward expression to something of that contradiction, that interpenetration, which is the very essence of the elements expressed. Encouraged by him, we have put aside for an instant the veil which we interposed between our consciousness and ourselves. He has brought us back into our own presence.

Were the Novelists successful at achieving this? Was doing this even possible? Here, I argued that the Novelists cannot overcome the Incommensurability, the Overarching, and the Anatomical Problems and that some crucial definitive features of the Stream cannot be represented in the Novel. No matter how one tackles the problem of the representation of the Stream in the Novel, the conceptual, technical, or formalistic perspectives are all related to a problem of representation as a philosophical art theory. Now, the obvious result, according to (at least some of) the representationalist theories of art, must be that the Novel is not a successful artwork (Carroll, 1999).

However, the success of representing a philosophical scientific theory well in fiction is of little consequence as to whether the artwork is successful on its own. For example, phrenology, now considered as a pseudo-scientific theory, was a psychological view that was influential enough to have influenced several works of fiction.³⁷ In the heyday of phrenology, a novel like *Jane Eyre* which represents traces of phrenological influence (Armstrong, 2005), might have been lauded for its accurate representations of phrenology. For example, the scenes where the titular character talks about her own “organ of Veneration,” (Brontë, 1847/2001: 39), or

³⁷ Phrenology stated that “the physical formation of the head was indicative of the contents within” (Armstrong, 2005: 109). Moreover, “in Victorian phrenology, the contents of the head were broken down to represent a mixed array of what was then seen to make up a ‘self’ —personality traits, mental and physical abilities, virtues and faults” (Armstrong, 2005: 109).

tries to read Mr. Rochester's forehead to see "a solid enough mass of intellectual organs," (Brontë, 2001: 112) are usually taken to be representative of phrenology (Armstrong, 2005).

But if the worth of an artwork solely depended on its success to represent an understanding of reality according to some scientific theory, then *Jane Eyre*, a novel that appeals to phrenology, must have been rendered an unsuccessful artwork when phrenology was discredited as a scientific theory. Since this is not the case, we most certainly look for a diverse array of qualities when we judge the worth of artworks, besides their success in representing various philosophical scientific theories that might have influenced their writers.

Moreover, we generally do not judge psychological phenomena's depiction in fiction as "wrong" in themselves. We appreciate how the authors deal with the complexity and the variety of psychological phenomena which are usually very personal and private. So, we obviously do not always expect artworks to depict reality as it is. Quite the contrary, we expect art to offer alternative representations of reality so that it broadens our conception of reality. The same applies to the Novel.

6.3. THE GRAND FINALE

The Novel makes us adopt some new perspectives as to how fiction writing can be revolutionized and one might value the Novel due to its experimental and rebellious nature in illustrating the possibility of producing fiction that is solely composed of psychological materials. One might acknowledge the sophisticated representations of

different levels of consciousness in the Novel. One might value the Novel due to its unity of texture and structure. One might be cognizant of the rich symbolist detail in the Novel, relish the elaborate use of rhetorical devices to enrich the representation of consciousness. One might appraise the Novel because it is a part of a historical lineage of fiction writing that sincerely attempts to revolutionize how fiction is composed. One might appreciate the Novel artistically because it reveals the richness and privacy of conscious experiences and mental life. One might acclaim the Novelists because they were diligent in rendering the unedited impressions, inner conflicts, debates, and deliberations of her characters by recording every mundane detail. One might respect the Novelists because they fused many of their influences such as psychoanalysis, film, symbolism, and musical forms into their work.³⁸ One might commend the Novelists for trying to depict the psychological duration by extending the present indefinitely to feel like the Novel always takes place in the present. One might value the Novel due to its sole reliance on conscious unfolding, but *not* “the stream of consciousness,” as the Novel *cannot* represent the Stream. Hence, one might still consider the Novel as a successful artwork, even though the Novelists failed to overcome the Incommensurability, the Overarching, and the Anatomical Problems.

We can say that considerations about verisimilitude or believability factor in *only* when you label your novel as a “stream of consciousness” novel. That is, if the name of the genre is “the stream of consciousness genre,” it is not unreasonable to expect

³⁸ For example, Woolf uses cinematic devices, especially in *Mrs Dalloway*. Also, symbols in the Novel are used to account for the privacy of personal consciousness (Humphrey, 1958). Finally, to see how the Novelists tried to “replicate” musical forms, see Friedman, 1955.

some kind of familiarity between the stream of consciousness in philosophical psychology and the artworks of the genre. Here, I pointed out that there are some qualities inherent to the Stream that are unlikely to be represented in fiction, so that we should reconsider the idea that the Novel is best read as a representation of the Stream. I argued that there might not be a strong link between the two, a link which the literary theorists of the day seemed to want to establish desperately.

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