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## Stream of consciousness in araby

Andrew has been writing for decades, publishing articles online and in print. His many interests include literature, the arts and nature.James Joyce photographed by C.Ruf in 1918James Joyce, Stream of Consciousness technique and Edouard DujardinJames Joyce, the Irish novelist and writer, published one of the most influential and I would suggest, difficult novels of modern times, Ulysses, in 1922. He used a new narrative technique known as stream of consciousness, going inside the mind of characters, revealing innermost thoughts, feelings and sensations.But Joyce acknowledged that the idea for his controversial writings came from a French novelist, Edouard Dujardin, in particular from a short novel he'd written that appeared in serial form in a Paris magazine, Revue wagnerienne in 1887. These had been collected into a book published in 1888 and which, rumour has it, Joyce bought from a French railway bookstall one day.Dujardin's book - Les Lauriers sont coupes (The laurels have been cut) - provided the spark for James Joyce. It tells the story of a young Frenchman, Daniel Prince, strolling through Paris streets for a mere 6 hours, thinking about his affection for Léah, an actress.As an introduction to stream of consciousness I would recommend the following first book to read - James Joyce's Dubliners/A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, available here.Dubliners (1914) is a series of short stories, written conventionally, whilst A Portrait of (1916) uses stream of consciousness. It's fascinating to see the development of Joyce's prose style.James Joyce's journey into stream of consciousness narrative had begun. But who was it who first coined this now well known phrase?Who First Thought of the Term Stream of Consciousness?It was the brother of writer Henry James, psychologist William James, who first wrote about the stream of consciousness in his The Principles of Psychology, published in volumes between1878-1890.These volumes were published in book form in 1890, the culmination of his work on the theory of mind. His was one of the first attempts to acknowledge the inner life of the mental processes.William James wrote : A river or stream is the metaphor by which it (consciousness) is most naturally described. In talking of it hereafter, let us call it the stream of thought, of consciousness, or of subjective life. From Psychological Theory into an Art FormThe Principles of Psychology proved to be a groundbreaking book and opened the door to a new interior mental world. In America, William James became the first to give lessons in psychology at university.Aspiring young writers, keen to sharpen their techniques and ride the modernist wave began to experiment in prose. For some novelists, 'looking into our own minds and reporting what we there discover' (William James) became all important; expressing the contents of a character's mind without interruption from the narrator was the way forward.This was a radical turn away from realism and conventional narrative prose. The birth of the interior monologue had begun.Fiction Writers and the NovelFiction writers and novelists before Dujardin and Joyce had used conventional techniques to help the reader get into the mind, heart and soul of characters.Dujardin pioneered the technique of opening up and displaying mental content direct to the reader. Joyce (among other novelists) took this idea to the extreme in his later novels. Readers could now go into the crucible of the mind, following the author as the character's feelings, thoughts, ideas, associations and near unconscious perceptions were laid bare.Other writers to express themselves in similar fashion include:Dorothy Richardson (1873 -1959) - Pilgrimage 1915.Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) - Mrs Dalloway 1925.William Faulkner (1897-1962) - As I Lay Dying 1930.Samuel Beckett (1906-1989) - Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnameable - trilogy - 1951Jack Kerouac - (1922 - 1969) - On The Road 1957 - interior monologue'Stream of consciousness narrative isn't for everyone. Some writers are not convinced of the technique within a novel, saying it distracts from the plot and can put the reader off.There's no doubt that some of Joyce's work is perplexing to read; innovative it may be but the average reader might liken it to a form of mental torture!Personally I think books like Ulysses and Finnegan's Wake are best approached as poetry - you have to alter your mindset before taking them on. Do not expect a straightforward read!What Is So Different about Stream of Consciousness Technique?Stream of consciousness technique differs from other narrative styles in that the author lays out for the reader the unbroken flow of a character's mind. As a technique it can involve little proper grammar, unusual punctuation, abrupt changes of theme, and random sentence structure, depending on the author.What a writer offers when using this technique is a private mindscape of the character, in which perceptions co-exist with half formed ideas and raw thought and feelings. The writer is essentially looking into the character, digging out the near unconscious material that exists in the head, heart and soul.Stream of consciousness novels and stories from various authors began to appear steadily from about 1914 onwards and continue to this day.But it is James Joyce who is generally considered the king of the genre. His books Ulysses, published in 1922, and Finnegan's Wake 1939 are supreme examples and are looked upon as masterpieces by some.Les lauriers sont Coupes - Edouard Dujardin's breakthrough novelThe short novel Les Lauriers sont Coupes was translated into English and published in 1938 as We'll To The Woods No More. This innocent sounding title comes from a French poem Nous n'irons plus au bois, les lauriers sont coupes (the laurels are cut down).Les Lauriers is seen as the first serious attempt by a novelist to use the interior monologue throughout. Joyce then made this stream of consciousness technique his own. It has become one of the most important tools of the modern fiction writer.Edouard Dujardin's book is still available today.Edouard Dujardin sketched by Félix VallottonAn extract from Edouard Dujardin's noveland, with these hands, with my hands and my arms and my heart, steam, a tremor, a warmth, a poignance, it rises to my eyes ; I almost faint; oh,I want you; no formalities; the humble love, the beautiful projects, with late loves prepared so long, departures, renunciation, too had the renunciation, my lover, if I want you, and I look at her pale flesh, harbinger of foolish joys, the one I would give to a dream. Our hands pull and push; I am back two steps; she comes to me; she puts her hands on my shoulders; and, dreamlike, she intoxicates me with her fairytale voice.James Joyce and Dubliners : ArabyJoyce published Dubliners, 15 short stories based on Dublin characters, in 1914. Two stories in particular stick out as early trials of stream of consciousness technique. Araby and Eveline. This extract is from Araby:Her image accompanied me even in places the most hostile to romance. On Saturday evenings when my aunt went marketing I had to go to carry some of the parcels. We walked through the flaring streets, jostled by drunken men and bargaining women, amid the curses of labourers, the shrill litanies of shop-boys who stood on guard by the barrels of pigs' cheeks, the nasal chanting of street-singers, who sang a come-all-you about O'Donovan Rossa, or a ballad about the troubles in our native land. These noises converged in a single sensation of life for me: I imagined that I bore my chalice safely through a throng of foes. Her name sprang to my lips at moments in strange prayers and praises which I myself did not understand. My eyes were often full of tears (I could not tell why) and at times a flood from my heart seemed to pour itself out into my bosom. I thought little of the future. I did not know whether I would ever speak to her or not or, if I spoke to her, how I could tell her of my confused adoration. But my body was like a harp and her words and gestures were like fingers running upon the wires.Celebrating the work of James Joyce every year in Dublin on Bloomsday.Extract from A Portrait of the Artist as a Young ManHer heart simple and willful as a bird's heart? Towards dawn he awoke, what sweet music ! His soul was all dewy wet. Over his limbs in sleep pale cool waves of light had passed. He lay still, as if his soul lay amid cool waters, conscious of faint sweet music. His mind was waking slowly to a tremulous morning knowledge, a morning inspiration. A spirit filled him, pure as the purest water, sweet as dew, moving as music. But how faintly it was inbreathed, how passionlessly, as if the seraphim themselves were breathing upon him ! His soul was waking slowly, fearing to awake wholly. It was that windless hour of dawn when madness wakes and strange plants open to the light and the moth flies forth silently. An enchantment of the heart! The night had been enchanted. In a dream or vision he had known the ecstasy of seraphic life. Was it an instant of enchantment only or long hours and years and ages Joyce's Ulysses - Narrative Becomes More ExtremeIn Ulysses, James Joyce takes the idea of consciousness as a stream and runs with it! His narrative becomes increasingly manic and ends with large, dense paragraphs of unpunctuated thoughts from the mind of Molly Bloom, wife of Leopold, the lead character.Extract from UlyssesHis heart astir he pushed in the door of the Burton restaurant. Stink gripped his trembling breath: pungent meatjuice, slush of greens. See the animals feed.Men, men, men.Perched on high stools by the bar, hats shoved back, at the tables calling for more bread no charge, swilling, wolfing gobfuls of sloppy food, their eyes bulging, wiping wetted moustaches. A pallid suetfaced young man polished his tumbler knife fork and spoon with his napkin. New set of microbes. A man with an infant's saucestained napkin tucked round him shovelled gurgling soup down his gullet. A man spitting back on his plate: halfmasticated gristle: gums: no teeth to chewchewchew it. Chump chop from the grill. Bolting to get it over. Sad booser's eyes. Bitten off more than he can chew. Am I like that? See ourselves as others see us. Hungry man is an angry man. Working tooth and jaw. Don't! O! A bone! That last pagan king of Ireland Cormac in the schoolpoem choked himself at Sletty southward of the Boyne. Wonder what he was eating. Something galoptious. Saint Patrick converted him to Christianity. Couldn't swallow it all however.Extract from Ulysses by James Joycethe old windows of the posadas 2 glancing eyes a lattice hid for her lover to kiss the iron and the wineshops half open at night and the castanets and the night we missed the boat at Algeciras the watchman going about serene with his lamp and O that awful deepdown torrent O and the sea the sea crimson sometimes like fire and the glorious sunsets and the figtrees in the Alameda gardens yes and all the queer little streets and the pink and blue and yellow houses and the rosegardens and the jessamine and geraniums and cactuses and Gibraltar as a girl where I was a Flower of the mountain yes when I put the rose in my hair like the Andalusian girls used or shall I wear a red yes and how he kissed me under the Moorish wall and I thought well as well him as another and then I asked him with my eyes to ask again yes and then he asked me would I yes to say yes my mountain flower and first I put my arms around him yes and drew him down to me so he could feel my breasts all perfume yes and his heart was going like mad and yes I said yes I will Yes.Joyce's Finnegans WakeThis novel has been described as 'a beast of a book' and 'the ultimate Modernist work of fiction' and 'A great riddle or maze. An amalgamation of gods. Obscure pun-drenched birtongue, strangest little song you'll ever damn hear.'Joyce worked his way towards this novel, digging into his psyche to produce a book some claim the internet was created for! It has a cult status. A minority say that only an Irishman (or woman) can truly get the most out of FW, by wringing it out loud in a thick brogue, in the middle of Dublin at 3am.Don't expect a straightforward journey if you decide to read this book. This is a mountain under the sea, at night, with a storm overhead, strange wriggling alien-like creatures floating into your mind, into your ears, out of your eyes and back again. There is a refuge on this mountain which could take decades to find. Even then it could be an illusion.If you want to read this incredible book you can find it here.Extract from Finnegans WakeSniffer of carrion, premature gravedigger, seeker of the nest of evil in the bosom of a good word, you, who sleep at our vigil and fast for our feast, you with your dislocated reason, have cutely foretold, a jophet in your own absence, by blind poring upon your many scalds and burns and blisters, impetiginous sore and pustules, by the auspices of that raven cloud, your shade, and by the auguries of rooks in parliament, death with every disaster, the dynamitisation of colleagues, the reducing of records to ashes, the levelling of all customs by blazes, the return of a lot of sweettempered gunpowdered didst unto didst but it never stirruck your mudhead's obtundity (O hell, here comes our funeral! O pest, I'll miss the post!) that the more carrots you chop, the more turnips you slit, the more murphies you peel, the more onions you cry over, the more bullbeef you butch, the more mutton you crackerhack, the more potherbs you pound, the fiercer the fire and the longer your spoon and the harder you gruel with more grease to your elbow the merrier fumes your new Irish stew.Final Word on James JoyceHaving read Dubliners and most of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man plus a few pages of Ulysses, I can see the progress made by Joyce in his attempt to experiment with narrative technique in the stream of consciousness mode.Each new book becomes more challenging for the reader. Ulysses for example has lots of early dialogue, interspersed with inner thoughts (of Leopold Bloom). Towards the end of the book lengthy paragraphs become the norm. These are hard to get through for the reader, sort of slippery, long chains of monologue.Finnegans Wake is the ultimate - an extremely difficult book that I've only ever dipped into on the odd occasion - when I'm feeling brave or tormented by the world.If you haven't read any Joyce I'd recommend starting with Dubliners. These are approachable stories, well worth the read.For those who want to delve further into the world of Joyce here is an excellent link that will take you to plays, music and poetry, all inspired by Finnegans Wake, his magnum opus.SourcesThe Novels and Short Stories of james Joyce.Robinson, K. E. "The Stream of Consciousness Technique and the Structure of Joyce's 'Portrait.'" James Joyce Quarterly, vol. 9, no. 1, 1971, pp. 63–84. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/25486944. Accessed 12 June 2021.Manuscript drafts of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and Ulysses by James Joyce - The British Library (bl.uk)© 2016 Andrew Spacey

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