

# Stream of Consciousness as a New Method of Creating Works of Art

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## Abstract

This study was conducted to evaluate characteristics of the stream of consciousness based on its literary components. The objective of this study was to examine theoretical principles of the stream of consciousness in respect of creating works of art. To do so, this descriptive analytical study was performed through library and field investigations. This study led to a rather complicated structure of the stream of consciousness that crosses the border of past limitations, roots in the artists' creative mind, and introduces matters perceived in many different ways. This mode is actually the path the artists' mind passes through in order to create a work of art.

**Key words:** Stream of consciousness, Artists' mind, Creating works of art

## INTRODUCTION

In every art medium, artists use their different perceptions of the surrounding realities to create a new world that is much broader than a range of events of a story. In other words, artists depict events in a way that they fit well into even the narrative, temporal, and spatial framework and can induce the concepts completely. To show the boundless reality of an author, artists sometimes create their intended character, event, and wholeness in a way that astonishes and engages the addressees mentally and physically. An art medium actually considers the infinite reality and its complicated broad horizon in life as all events occur and are recorded around that reality, and thus the medium influences the entire process and makes a different future. This study was performed to analyze the characteristics of the stream of consciousness and examine the flow of thoughts in art literature and media that are full of contributing and effective elements in order to perceive the complex structure of this mode and emphasize the impact of each of these elements on the creation and perception

of art works. In fact, mental contexts forming the stream of consciousness are like a process artists pass through in order to create and ideate a work of art. The addressees' perception of art works is of special importance also in modern works, and there is a possible recreation that reminds the significance of the style in question in that process. It is hoped this study will be a guide for modern artists.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN NARRATION

The stream of consciousness is a modern mode of narration in the West emerging one century ago. Many pundits, critics, and writers of narratives still do not know it scientifically and accurately. However, works of this narrative mode of writing meet five major characteristics as follows: narrative modes, language, techniques for making the language of the narrative close to the mind, time, and plot. These characteristics are considered and evaluated as factors influencing the works of the stream of consciousness. In this narrative mode, authors break traditional patterns of narration and represent the characters' thoughts and mentalities that are reflected from their mind to the addressees without any objective and order.

In narrations of the stream of consciousness, the category of character precedes the plot, and the focus is nothing

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but the character and its incompleteness, the diverse levels of unconscious and semiconscious mind, and outflow of ambiguous disordered desires, feelings, and emotions (Forster, 1974, 51-67). Moreover, authors focalize the narrative in the mind of characters as initial actors of the narration and leave the scene in order to use the narration as a means of making readers who are secondary actors interpret the narrative. These narrative modes of which the major characteristic is the outward inconsistency are characterized by the absence of the author as an interpreter and descriptor of the narration (Loiyd, 2001, 11-13).

One of the highly common modes of the stream of consciousness is the interior monologue representing the characters' uttered inner and emotional experiences in different levels of mind, at the pre-speech level. The assumption in the direct monologue is that authors are not present, and characters' inner experiences are transferred to the addressees directly from their mind. However, authors are present in the narration in the indirect monologue and move along with the interior monologue of characters. In this way, they transfer characters' mentalities to the readers. In this mode, authors as omniscient narrators also transfer the contents with their own language from the third-person perspective and rarely from the second-person perspective as if the contents were quoted directly from characters' mind.

Another narrative mode is that characters tell their thoughts and feelings to themselves in order to make others aware of their intentions. This mode, which is called soliloquy, contributes to the plot of the story besides introducing the characters' mental characteristics to the readers. Authors of stories of the stream of consciousness distinguish different modes through using a variety of typographic signs or letters that they feel necessary for direct induction of an interior monologue. The use of these modes actually makes the language of stories closer to the language and atmosphere of the mind and induces the breaks and inconsistencies more favorably. However, it should be noted that this mode is sometimes used to emphasize the important changes in the perspective, space, time, and the depth of mentalities (Bayat, 2011, 114-119).

Linguistic techniques used in this narrative mode to reflect the mental processes are accomplished within poetry and lyrical elements. According to Jakobson, mental processes make use of mechanisms of selection and substitution and integration and combination, that is, metaphor and trope (Jakobson, 2001, 115-121). All these elements are used in stories of the stream of consciousness to make the language of stories closer to the language of mind. Furthermore, the use of these figuratives increases the linguistic ambiguity of these works. Authors of the stream

of consciousness actually consider both metaphor and trope when creating monologues. Due to the fact that metaphor is based on similarities between elements and their concepts and aesthetic aspects, however, metaphor has been used in narrations more than trope has, and this makes the language of stories closer to the poetry. These figuratives, mostly trope, are used in the film industry more widely.

Stories of the stream of consciousness are dependent on the free association mechanism although authors may use free associations with their own simplicity or complexity. Associations can be considered as a kind of mental process in which individuals relate thoughts, words, feelings, and concepts to one another if they have such a potential. The capability to recall them is achieved from similarity, simultaneity, or other relationships. The significant point is that what comes to the mind through associations is directly related to the individuals' life, past, and experiences.

Stories following this narrative mode approach the time concept in a special way as they eliminate the past and future in order to obtain an intuitive discovery of the present time. In this respect, succession and continuity of time are replaced with memories in the mind of characters; memories that mix the past, present, and future totally. The stories' characters face with the real time on one hand, which is the conventional assumption of time regularly set as minutes and seconds and influences all characters' acts, motions, and behaviors and face with the true time on the other hand, which is more important for them, at deeper levels of their mind where the narrative focuses. The true time is that individuals are aware of in their own consciousness when contemplating and the pure memory that is an intuitive power and contributes to the storage of the entire individuals' past (Bayat, 2011, 21-123).

Times of revelation in such stories and even other varieties appearing as a result of a simple spark accelerate the perception and consciousness. This phenomenon is called epiphany. At such times, characters actually achieve a perception of their surrounding truths and affairs that affects their ideology (Edel, 1988, 130). After the above glance at characteristics of the stream of consciousness, it should be noted that this narrative mode was developed in Iran following its formation in the West, and Iranian writers have tried to create works compatible with this mode.

## **THE STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS AS A METHOD FOR CREATING WORKS OF ART**

The human mind has multiple different qualities, and all events surrounding the humans always exist in their mind's

layers and constantly affect their reactions and behaviors. It is actually better to say that humans' consciousness is a combination of their experiences from the past up to the present, and these experiences are changing continuously and do not stay the same. In this respect, inspirations or the smooth flow of ideas in mind occur out of those lived experiences.

Therefore, the art may result from the recovery, continuity, and integrity of mind and consciousness of the past to which forces are exerted from a direction and thus changes constantly.

Considering that there are five major characteristics for this narrative mode in literature, the author describes how the stream of creating works of art is formed on the basis of the mentioned components. In all works of art, narrators are usually one individual or a group of individuals who deem the rules of their society or surrounding invalid or somehow in conflict with their ideas although they are bound to those rules. Artists themselves determine the criterion for this judgment. The modernist viewpoint governing this narrative mode makes artists of other arts not to explicate and reflect like a mirror although they make much effort to clarify their work. Such a force is actually applied on the artists' mind unconsciously; however, there is a possible prevention leading to non-occurrence of pure creativity.

In narrations, authors focalize the narrative in the characters' mind, whilst in other works of art, artists stand like a shadow and without an intermediary, appear as the initial actor, and eventually communicate with the addressees through the narrative represented in their work. In fact, writers determine characters in narrations and explain the story from the perspective of characters' mind. In works of art, however, artists make another self in order to be able to treat their intended subject purer than ever and go out of their self-made constraints and frameworks to some extent.

In the course of creating any work of visual art, creativity takes place through open horizons and different layers, and creators of these works themselves are not present and instead have the addresses interpret and describe the content. The creation of works and then the assumption of any interpretation and meaning for every art content happen through new experiences, and thus, the development of different actors in artists' mind results in a broad conceptual spectrum.

In this process, artists express their inner emotional experiences continuously. This happens in levels of the brain not reaching the communication areas, that is,

writing or speaking. Moreover, this mental process seems completely unadorned and sometimes illogical in those layers as there is no chronological order, discipline, logic, or censorship, and thus, no specific content can be presented in this situation. It is actually the baseline of a mental process that occurs for the purpose of ideation and creation in the present time and should become perfect and mature in next procedures in the artists' mind.

More clearly speaking, the interior monologue engages the artist, and the works created eventually are transferred from the artist's mind to the addressees directly or indirectly in accordance with the creator's monologues.

Artists sometimes align their descriptions or judgments with the omniscient point of view and limit themselves to the description of memories, acts, and thoughts of other characters and groups and vice versa in the creation of works. In other words, they imagine the addressees in front of themselves and connect their emotions with designs and acts in this way. They transfer their mental identity and inner life based on their intended art context.

It should be noted that theorists of this style never consider the use of all these techniques simultaneously in one work as a criterion for the stream of consciousness, and this is considerably true in the process of creation. In other words, artists may use any of the components or techniques based on their personality in order to provide grounds for ideation and creativity in presentation of their desired thoughts.

Another subject discussed in techniques specific to this narrative mode is the dreadful outburst, which is perceptibly represented in varieties of art more than other elements. The verbal equivalent of the above-mentioned phrase is challengeable for writers, and as they are non-verbal, they act very perceptibly and more applicably in other contexts of visual art. The sensory emotions and perceptions coming from any direction are manifested in different appearances as they are not based on particular mental conventions and agreements.

Although language is the main element of literature, and writers of the stream of consciousness induce the atmosphere specific to a story using different techniques, the language introduces itself through different contexts, media, and materials in other arts, especially visual arts, and artists try to represent a conventional language using methods expressing their feeling.

The artists' linguistic techniques in pictorial art also reflect their mental processes that are mixed with other mechanisms, including metaphors, integration, combination, and substitution. All these techniques and

mechanisms actually take place to make the language and message of the work close to the artists' mentalities and eventually increase the perception of the work by a wide range of people.

It is absolutely clear that the use of each above-mentioned mechanisms in every work is not proper and not the same. The reason is that the use of each mechanism finally results in the induction of certain spaces and manifestations. In modernist works, all techniques together are highly involved with ambiguity in the process of making the language of mind close to its picture in different frames. In fact, addressees facing any kind of art work or content engage in a type of ambiguity when they are supposed to directly communicate with the mental contents of the creator without any explanation from the creator of that art content or work. Generally, disorganized, inconsistent, and ambiguous contents in mind appear through ambiguous evident implications or certain markings. However, it should not be disregarded that artists try their best to do reproduction with utmost similarity in order to be better perceived. Disturbances and ambiguities in a work are presented at different qualities and appear in a way that the addressees are categorized on the basis of their own reading. In other words, the addressees do not perceive the content in the same way, and each of them reach different levels of layers and perceive a part of the content.

Another element used by writers to reflect the fluidity of their thoughts in the stream of consciousness is the lyrical quality. This element is accomplished using techniques, such as metaphor and symbolization. The lyrical element in works of art may occur both in the mental view of the artists' self and in representation of their art as in symbolism that acts like a corridor through which artists pass to express their intentions and goals and more clearly to represent what is going on in their mind. Given that one of important aspects of art is the amount of communication with the addressees and comprehensibility of the art content at different levels, artists try to express their desired concepts through similes and metaphors. Moreover, if the artists' view or attitude toward their desired subject is developed very unconventionally, the work of art is hardly perceived or not perceived in some occasions.

Artists also use other methods for making the language and context of their intended art close to their mind. Association is one of the processes occurring in this regard. Artists actually can freely evoke their associations regardless of the fact that this is reasonable or not depending on a direct connection they have had with their desired subject in the past or at present or certain or different experiences they have in mind. Furthermore, artists' beliefs about

myths, public beliefs, or cultural traditions may influence their decision-making in this regard. This mechanism actually depends on the artists' mental characteristics; the extent to which it is used by artists. The use of a personal or public style also may influence the concepts they intend to represent or process and even introduce a different method as a new language or point of view. This can be an effective factor for artists in creating a new style, viewpoint, and expression in which they somehow reach self-knowledge and achieve a specific personal style that is closer to their true self and arises from their heart, mind, and emotions after passing through the whole process and referring to different layers of their mind. This principle is considered an important element in art in order that works created in any ground enjoy stronger power for communication.

Of all the characteristics mentioned for this narrative mode, time is the most important characteristic. Time is resolved through moving in different layers of mind, and the influence of artists' experiences up to now leads to the argument that the past and future are somehow eliminated. Events in modern visual arts are like contrasts between external or objective time and internal or subjective time of artists, and this method of using elements occurs in a different way in order to show the modern nature of these works of art. These two times are actually ignored as the visual creator reaches intuition at the present time. Therefore, the temporal continuity is totally disturbed and then rebuilt based on the creator's desire and perception. These artists' sudden references to the past providing the ground for current events and also communication bridges that are then developed with the future in mind all arise from psychological and philosophical events in the artists' mind and are made in their attitude. This process actually suggests the elimination of narrative times in the artists' mind and eventually results in creation and ideation in the present time. The result is like an intuition achieved at the end of the process.

Different methods of writing should be reviewed in order to scrutinize methods of implementing this narrative mode in the literature. As the different methods of writing and marking in the literature make the language of mind close to the writing, different techniques of representation are used to do so in visual arts by artists. For instance, executive techniques, even the type of colors or manner of drawing, in the painting art may allow artists better connect their mind with their work and thus increase the comprehensibility of that work.

The lack of temporal succession or emotional constellations in a work is the representation of events in the past and future without chronological order in the artists' mind and can be exhibited in visual works better than in the

literature. A main subject repeated in the artists' mind makes the eyes move and eventually attracts the attentions and again emphasizes the subject and artists' mind more than before. This spatial process engages the addressees' viewpoint and mind to the artists' will and is born from the heart of artists, and all these items occur to create a perfect work different from other works. This process happens to develop a public style, which would be known as the artist's personal method, in the society and can become eternal in line with the time as a certain style in some occasions. Resolving times and spaces in this way, artists can enter the modern or postmodern world.

The whole process eventually occurs following a simple spark in the artists' mind leading to the final decision when creating a work. Furthermore, the initial spark may develop prosperity and epiphany in addressees at the time of representing a work besides improving the work. The spark is that point of epiphany that is highly important for creators of works of art. This is actually the final point of the process making artists reach pure intuition and create the purest works. Another noticeable point is that some processes occurring in the stream of consciousness make references to the future possible. When addressees watch a work of art, and when the artist is creating it, mental functions are manifested within different frames, such as the imagination about the future, desires, and events, and the realistic mind of the addressees and artist breaks the time and disturbs its order.

Artists making advantage of the stream of consciousness do not intend to introduce and follow a narrative; rather, they find a different kind of freedom in representation of the levels of their own unconscious and semiconscious mind and can create a different work of art through visualizing their feelings and emotions and outflow of these feelings and emotions in their mind, without already thinking about the design of the work. Given that the addressees are considered very important in this mode, empathy with the work and possibility of experiencing the creator's mentalities upon representation of that work result in production of a new story, and this is one of the major characteristics of modernization. However, the public, not intellectuals and critics, should determine the pleasantness of works as this mode allows the addressees have various perceptions and subjective mentalities and thus can be deemed popular and also unique at the same time.

Following the foregoing, it should be noted that the creator's mentalities are used only as the primary material for creation of a mental work. Therefore, some personal characteristics of artists are reflected in works. Although it should not be ignored that artists can use their imaginative

and creative aspect at different qualitative and quantitative levels in order to be able to create a work. However, it is absolutely evident that traces of artists' memories, personal experiences, and mind exist in works exhibited, and thus, the success rate of art contents in connecting the addressees with the artists' mind may be high or low depending on their life. It must be noted that addressees should have sufficient mental experience in order to be able to perceive a work of art and empathize with that work. Eventually, it should be considered that this narrative mode can be an important factor in development of prosperity and epiphany of the creator's mind, reaching pure ideas and new attitudes, and creating a work of art as it frees contents of the unconscious levels of mind and presents them unreasonably and disorderly.

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