Bachelor's Thesis 2024

Bachelor of Science - Psychological Science

University of Padova – Padova, Italy

Thesis

An Understanding of Human Thought Through the Lens of Stream of Consciousness

Alessio Francesco Iliceto

Supervisor: **Prof Benjamin Joseph Lewis Martin**

November 2024

Table of Contents

1 Abstract

This thesis explores the concept of "stream of consciousness" across philosophy, psychology, and literature. It examines William James's and René Descartes's philosophical contributions to understanding consciousness and time, highlighting James's concept of the "stream" as a continuous flow of entangled past, present, and future realities. Freud's psychoanalytic approach, utilizing stream of consciousness in therapy, is analysed, emphasizing its influence on understanding the unconscious mind and the development of psychoanalytic treatments. Finally, the thesis investigates how writers employed stream of consciousness techniques in novels, showcasing a shift from objective narrative to subjective inner experience, exemplified by the interior monologue. The study concludes that stream of consciousness offers a multidisciplinary perspective on human thought, revealing the interconnectedness of subjective and shared realities.

2 Introduction

This thesis proposes to delve into the concept of the stream of consciousness and to address the question: What roles and theoretical value does the phenomenon of stream of consciousness have in the three fields of human knowledge of Philosophy, Psychology and English literature?

These disciplines complement each other in the use of the concept of stream of consciousness. The literal meaning of stream of consciousness can be inferred through the linking and chaining of episodic sequential conscious thoughts that share a form of connection (McGilvary, 1907). While the stream of consciousness has the aforementioned literal meaning, each discipline developed over time provides a unique definition and interpretation, capturing different aspects of this concept. The literal definition is insufficient in capturing the full extent of what the stream of consciousness is, since it involves the complexity of man's mental processes. It is perhaps the evolution of the subject matter that played a major contribution to many practices and techniques that are

today used in many different fields such as film, narrative writing, and even clinical psychology.

Under the philosophical domain, which is dealt with in the first section, this research engages seminal thinkers, such as William James and René Descartes, exploring their contributions to our understanding of consciousness, selfhood, and the nature of thought.

From a psychological perspective, referred to in the second section, contemporary theories of cognition and mental processes have been a fundamental steppingstone for all further psychological research and provided a scientific backdrop to literary and philosophical interpretations. This last was achieved through the examination of empirical research into the consciousness and cognitive functions of the first patients of psychoanalysis (Bowling, 1950). While the field was subject to revolutionary discoveries, movements, and practices, many of its core concepts and therapeutic approaches are still based upon the Freudian interpretation of the stream of consciousness.

In the third section, dedicated to literary fiction, the thesis details how authors, such as Virginia Woolf and James Joyce, employed the technique of stream of consciousness to capture the intricacies of inner thought, emotion, and perception. English literature was the field of study that permitted the stream of consciousness to reach public awareness. Authors pioneered new literary techniques, such as extreme interior monologue, in the attempt to represent the fluidity and fragmentation of human consciousness (Holland, 1986).

3   Stream of Consciousness

The stream of consciousness proposes an understanding for the way human thought unravels in the mind: there is much more that goes on in the mind than what we express to others. Thoughts and ideas are momentary flashes, blinks of reality that rarely make sense and quite often go away just as quickly as they were created. When trying to answer the question of "what are you thinking" or "how are you feeling", humans are found to satisfy

a close to impossible task: by taking a snapshot of what is going on inside the mind, they won't find a clear detailed map of thoughts and impressions easy to navigate, but a whole cluster of concepts, coloured by emotions and worries, and concurrently tinted by outside stimuli in real time. As a result, an individual is found to give rather simplistic, very inaccurate but socially acceptable responses, by extrapolating what they feel is the predominant thought or emotion of the moment, for example "I'm fine" or "I am just worried about my test results", ignoring all the other streams of thoughts too hard to explore.

The concept of stream of consciousness was first introduced by Alexander Bain in 1855 when he evaluated the integrations of different sensations in a unified experience (Harper, 2019). Subsequent philosophers, such as William James, and writers, like James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, moved forward with a new understanding of stream of consciousness: the way our mind moves from one idea to the next does not follow a direct flow of thought, but rather jumps and skips from one thought to the next (Bowler et al., 2020). These thoughts are intertwined, as there is a connection within the intellect of the person who is producing or experiencing these thoughts. This connection is seldom clear, it cannot be easily deciphered and could potentially be a gateway or glimpse of the person's unconscious mind.

The stream of consciousness is the result of putting together internal and external information to think, understand reality and bring us to make decisions. Moreover, the stream of consciousness is not solely fixed on the present but can wander from memories of the past to possible allusions of the future, and back to the reinterpretation of the present moment (Antrobus et al. 1966). It shows how we can detach from reality by the active or inactive process of wandering in and out of present attention, what is commonly known as *day-dreaming*. Immanuel Kant, an 18th century philosopher, claimed that reality is not a fixed absolute but rather relative to each individual, according to that person's sense of interpretation, which he called "lens" (Massimi, 2021). This lens, to some extent, can be associated with the stream of consciousness, because, through the ideas that make up the stream of consciousness, it is up to each person to determine which ones are crucial in their life when making choices.

4   Stream of Consciousness in the Philosophical Reality

4.1   William James' elaboration of the "stream of consciousness"

The late 19th century American philosopher and psychologist William James once wrote: "A Day full of excitement with no pause, is said to pass 'ere we know it. On the contrary, a day full of waiting, of unsatisfied desire for change, will seem a small eternity." (James, 1886). James built upon the work of Alexander Bain and coined the term "stream of consciousness" to describe the nature of the human mind. He remarked that if consciousness were like a chain of separate sensations and images, we would be incapable of acquiring knowledge, as the moment each sensation ceases, it would be gone forever; hence, each of those momentary states are not distinguishable one from the other but are rather undifferentiated elements of a complex essence.

James's innovative concept has important consequences for our individual interpretation of reality: "The knowledge of some other part of the stream, past or future, near or remote, is always mixed in with our knowledge of the present". In other words, James asserts that our perception of the present moment is actually our perception of a duration of time, where we continuously perceive the moment that has just passed and allude our minds to comprehend the moment that is about to become. Therefore, according to James, our reality, our "here and now", is a continuous stream of entangled realities of past and future, and, through the transformation of the latter into the former, we can exist in the present. To clarify his idea, James used the following example: he asserted that the current state of consciousness can be expressed as a sequence, such as ABCD, with A and B representing just past sensations, C representing a current sensation and D representing the expectation of an imminent sensation. The next thought in the stream of consciousness will be the sequence BCDE, with the lingering past sensations sequentially fading away and being replaced by new sensations. "Such lingering of old objects, the incomings of new, are the germs of memory and expectation. They give that continuity to consciousness without which it could not be called a stream."

Subsequent philosophers, however, criticized James's theory for being too centralized on the notion of subjectivity. The stream of consciousness, along with James's

other theories, was a result of a philosophical movement called *pragmatism*, for which James is deemed as one of the main founders. Pragmatism was focused on the proposal that it does not matter if an absolute truth exists, as long as an individual gives importance to their own truth or sense of reality. Stream of consciousness, in the way James suggested in his philosophy, is in fact strictly bound to the subject's perception of reality through their own thoughts, giving little importance to the concrete external reality that goes beyond the human mind. Certain philosophers criticized this claiming that an absolute truth exists: Bertrand Russell objected to James's philosophy with the claim that even Santa Claus exists, however only to the extent of our beliefs (Jager, 1972). Therefore, the stream of consciousness and passing of time cannot be eradicated from the surrounding reality but has to always reconnect to the actual passing of time and our perception can solely remain a perception and never truly go that extra step of becoming a given truth.

Even with its limitations, William James's theory certainly served as a fundamental steppingstone for the whole movement of stream of consciousness and for all later analyses on subjectivity. The idea that our perception of the flow of time is dependent upon the flow of our consciousness and our awareness of change has had a great impact on society. For example, in the English language with the common idiom "a watched pot never boils", or in Alfred Hitchcock's movies, where the prolonged, bleak and grey moments of life, for example a day in the office, are illustrated quickly, while moments that might last seconds, such as the moment a finger is about to press a button, are prolonged, turning them into the key elements of the movie.

4.2 René Descartes' Interpretation of Existence

William James was the first philosopher to officially coin and use the term Stream of Consciousness in 1980; nevertheless, the idea of introspection as a method of self-examination can be traced back to ancient philosophy, particularly to the teachings of Socrates in the 5th century BCE and the later works of Plato and Aristotle. After these great thinkers, the 17th century French philosopher René Descartes, stood out when philosophically studying the introspection of the human mind thanks to his contribution to the development of the stream of consciousness. Differently from James, who focused his attention towards the flow of time and how humans are almost incapable of perceiving the

actual present but rely on the interconnections between past and future, a concept that came around 250 years later, Descartes turned his interest towards the type of notion that is derived from within the single individual. In his analysis of human thinking, he had the objective of giving meaning to the inner emotions, feelings and ideas, which were in constant flux inside the mind. It would make sense to assume that a person is more attuned to understanding their own stream of consciousness compared to someone else's, and perhaps, even more capable at deciphering one's own complex sensations than achieving an irrefutable explanation for why the cup of tea in front of us undoubtedly exists (Schwitzgebel, 2010).

Descartes had the ultimate aim of determining or finding a quality or concept that is irrefutable, that goes beyond any doubt. In order to find such objective truth, he turned to a scrutinization of our inner selves, hence belonging to our stream of consciousness, but that can be extrapolated to universality, therefore something extremely private of ours but that everyone can recognize as a shared quality. He came up with "Je Pense Donc Je Suis", which he later translated to Latin: "Cogito Ergo Sum", which stands for "I think therefore I am". Descartes deemed this concept as the fundamental irrefutable truth that brought all his later philosophical developments: the demonstration that a person exists because said person is producing thoughts, ultimately even if those thoughts are doubting one's own existence. In order to produce any thought, one must first exist, even if those thoughts are doubts, for if a person does not exist, they cannot doubt their existence. Therefore, these thoughts that can be accounted as a stream of consciousness, are the ultimate proof of individual existence. According to Descartes, any other claim would depend on establishing the cogito first, as everything could be an outcome of our own mind: other people that are talking to us, the cup of tea that we are drinking from, as well as any other event in life. There is no proof that "reality" is not a mere production of our minds, just like dreams.

In his search for philosophically undeniable truth, Descartes did not deem human sensations as a reliable source, since there is no way to prove that one person is doing a specific act and not merely dreaming or imagining it. Cartesian doubt consisted in the ultimate elevation of scepticism towards everything, in the attempt to find certain

foundations for a first philosophy, one that cannot be dismantled or disproven. The ultimate demonstration of existence proposed a solution to the philosophically historic question of "how do I prove that I even exist?" and served, or at least so believed Descartes, as the first irrefutable philosophical building block.

Different philosophers following Descartes found numerous fallacies within his reasoning. Descartes deemed his *cogito* as sufficient for his existence, however he had no proof to demonstrate that his thoughts actually demonstrated his exact existence and not just merely an existence. It could be possible, following his idea of extreme scepticism, that each separate thought belongs to a different separate entity. Descartes never philosophically demonstrated that the stream of consciousness belongs to one individual. Although *cogito* demonstrates that something exists, and that something is producing such thoughts such as Descartes, it does not necessarily prove that Descartes himself exists (Rozemond, 1999).

Descartes' studies on stream of consciousness promoted the cultivation of logic and rationality and advised against any pursuit of blinded irrational thoughts. The French philosopher claimed that through introspection, guided by clarity of thought, one can find answers to numerous other dilemmas that obscure one's life. He was perhaps one of the greatest promoters for the increased self-analysis of one's stream of consciousness, with the objective of learning more about oneself through the control of one's behaviours and passions, all the while striving for a culmination of logic induced reasoning.

Overall, Descartes's work into human self-insight, further developed by James' direct approach towards stream of consciousness, created a steppingstone in the evolution of philosophical theories towards self-awareness of human beings.

5 Stream of Consciousness in Psychology

5.1 Sigmund Freud: Psychology as a new means of therapy

The mentality shifts that allowed the Stream of Consciousness to take place during the late 19th and early 20th century, with the scientific discoveries about time, the significant downfall of the British sense of supremacy, and the literary movement, had a decisive influence on the thinkers of the time, as seen in the previous section with the philosophical ideas of William James. Among these scholars, one stood out from the rest, Sigmund Freud, as through the exploration of the Stream of Consciousness he deployed the new revolutionizing concepts of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy, which served as a fundamental constituent in the creation and growth of psychology among the scientific community. Before Freud, Skinner, Pavlov, Watson, and few significant others of the 20th century, the idea that the mind should be viewed as a means to achieving overall human well-being never truly belonged to the scientific community. Even though the concept of mental illness has been part of human history for generations, for example with the four humours or the lobotomies, it is only with Sigmund Freud that the scientific community actually started considering the idea that the mind alone has therapeutic properties.

5.2 Freud's Theory of Mind

Freud, as the father of psychotherapy, utilized the psychological approach of identifying a problem and reaching a solution or improved state through a means of sharing and discussing with the therapist (Shulman et al., 2004). Scholars claim that Freud used the concept of stream of consciousness as a foundation for his therapy (Singer, 1998). His first patients were women of older age which, at the time, were labelled as hysterical. The approach would focus on patients' ability to communicate and express their issues to the psychologist/doctor through the elucidation of complex emotions and self-reflection. Freud was not focused on treating people who suffered from severe psychosis, schizophrenia or other psychological disorders that would inhibit a deeper understanding of oneself as his therapy required the capacity of discernment of one's own stream of consciousness. Additionally, his studio was very bare with the minimal essentials of a couch for the patient and behind a chair for the therapist, with the objective of minimizing distractions that could alter the therapeutic flow of thought. His therapy consisted in asking his clients

to lay on the couch, and, either with their eyes closed or by staring at the ceiling, allow the flow of ideas to run freely and create a narration. This process of allowing oneself to drift away and follow, in fact, the stream of consciousness, consequently lowering all the mental inhibitions present in an alert state, would allow the therapist to reach the closest part of the subconscious mind to gain insights on the problems the patient is facing.

Freud believed that a person's mind is composed of a conscious and an unconscious part, with the unconscious being the "Id", the most dominant part of the mind during the early stages of life, and later the development of the "Super-Ego" the conscious at its climax and an "Ego" that served as a connector between the two (Lampl-De Groot, 2017). According to Freud, the Id is the amoral egoistical unconscious, regulated by a principle of pleasures and primordial needs, while the Super-Ego starts to develop around the age of five and encompasses the moral consciousness, the prevalence of integrity and the sense of guilt (Nass, 2017). The mental conflicts arise when the unconscious forces seek expression; however, deemed immoral by the Super-Ego, they are met with opposing constraints, consequently resulting in an inner conflict and tension which the Ego has to constantly engage in, with power and greater expression constantly shifting between the Id and the Super-Ego. When the Super-Ego is prevailing, the person is at ease with society and its own norms, nevertheless feels a sense of longing for what is hidden within the subconscious. When the Id has the upper hand, the person gives in to desires, temptations or paranoia, as no longer capable of keeping them at bay, and has to deal with the later consequences of actions, often unacceptable by the larger society or perhaps even simply by personal and moral values. Freud believed that the stream of consciousness is the juxtaposition of conscious and unconscious processes, and therefore by asking his patients to narrate freely to the psychologist what came to their mind, he deemed himself capable of tapping into the deeper unaware part of the mind, the Id, as the ultimate sensible part of the mind, the Super-Ego, could not be physically able to filter out all the unconscious parts it judged inappropriate, given that the mind is a constant flux of emotions, ideas, feelings and concepts that flash into awareness and then instantly disappear. Through a therapeutic interpretation of such unconscious glimpses, the therapist is then able to shed light on the actual problem that the patient is facing and by making this last aware of the underlying hindrance, the healing process can begin.

Following Freud's studies, the presence and effect of the unconscious is recognized and accepted throughout the entire psychology community. The unconscious mental phenomena gained a major role for understanding both normal and pathological mental life. Moreover, early childhood experiences, thanks to Freud's analysis of the Id's development, are now considered crucial as having a decisive influence on the mental states later acquired in the adult phase (Hartmann, 1950). As a result of Freud's studies on the unconscious, and therefore on the stream of consciousness, the kind of relationship children have with their parents now plays a fundamental role in all types of talkative medicine. Longitudinal research has shown that three quarters of all mental health problems can be traced back, in an additive way, to adverse childhood events (Fonagy, 2010). Before Freud, there was little knowledge on how the struggle of young children to understand their complicated feelings about their earliest love objects and their place within the family would lay the foundations of enduring psychic structures, which then will determine the characteristics of future attachment relationships. Freud's theories and therapies might be considered overpassed by current psychodynamic approaches which are carried out in a more traditional dialogue between the patient and therapist. The extreme emphasis on the free association of ideas, the stream of consciousness, becomes less predominant in the psychodynamic setting. Nevertheless, certain features are still closely connected to psychoanalysis, such as the exploration of wishes, dreams and fantasies.

Freud, through the analysis of the stream of consciousness, was diligent in identifying different defence mechanisms that a patient would adopt in order to keep their sentient part safe from excessive distress. For instance, defence mechanisms include repression, denial and displacement (Brenner, 1981). These three were just a few of the mechanisms that Freud mentioned, however, they all share the trait of not actually facing the displaced desire, fear or affection. The act of stifling and internalizing thoughts, feelings, emotions into the subconscious generally resulted in the manifestation of other problems, the ones for which patients came to see Freud about.

5.3 Psychoanalytic Treatment

Psychoanalysis is the first contemporary approach to psychotherapy and comprises a set of specific techniques, such as free association of ideas, analysis of transference and countertransference and interpretation (Ferenczi, 1986). This type of therapeutic approach is also seen in Freud's interpretation of dreams, which greatly inspired the different writers of the following literature section of this thesis, where the suppressed desires come afloat when the conscious is asleep, aka during the dreaming phase, "dreams are gratification of the desire" (Freud, 1983). According to Freud, dreams are not inhibited by the conscious and not disturbed by outside stimuli. The manifested content is what the person sees in the dream, while the latent content is the meaning behind the dream, which gets changed and altered by the Super-Ego to render the dream more acceptable to the Ego. Consequently, similar to the writers and philosophers, Freud promoted an understanding of the free flow of ideas, which can be interpreted as the stream of consciousness.

Freud's study on the stream of consciousness not only paved the way for psychoanalysis, and later psychodynamics, but also resulted crucial in the promotion and understanding of psychological aid in the wider general sense, from helping children in hospitals to treating adult patients in the clinical setting.

6 Stream of Consciousness in Anglo-Saxon Literature

6.1 Crisis of certainties and the influence on 20th century novelists

With the World Wars and the other various elements of the 20th century, novelists no longer occupy the role of ethical and moral guides, as is noticeable in *Charles Dickens' Oliver Twist* and in the poems of the Romantic era, but rather simply portray life as it is. The sense of superiority of the author is completely lost; writers are cast into the spiralling chaos of confusion and disenchantment just like the rest of the population and, consequently, do not deem themselves as possible conductors that should steer to a new understanding of the present and, thus, to an evolved life. On the contrary, writers exist to

merely and modestly represent the downfallen current reality, through the eyes of their characters' stream of consciousness.

Furthermore, with Freud, Einstein, Nietzche and the other intellectuals of the time, there is a strong stress regarding the psychology of the single person. Rather than focusing on the society as a whole, for example, to re-quote Charles Dickens, who was interested in underlining the portrait of a society with different classes, novelists are concerned of how civilization is subjectively perceived by the individual people; the inner thoughts and judgments of their characters were exemplified through the representation of the characters' stream of consciousness. The events, the moments, no longer pose any importance, as they are replaced by the mind and the diverse points of view of each character, hence, mainly due to Freud's "interpretation of dreams", there is a decisive shift from the external to the internal world. The theory of relativity additionally suggested that time is indeed not linear but has a dissimilar pace in each person's mental representation of reality; this resulted with plots losing their linearity and being constantly interrupted by flashbacks and time shifts. This whole movement, known as the *stream-of-consciousness*, was a direct link to the birth of the interior monologue, with Virginia Woolf and James Joyce being vibrant examples, which most significantly characterized such narrative interval.

6.2   The Birth of a New Literary Style

The extreme disillusionment brought authors like T.S. Eliot and D.H. Lawrence to express in their poems, like T.S. Eliot's work of 1922 titled "The Wasteland", the idea of the decay of Western civilization. These authors use the stream of consciousness technique with the lack of coherent or logical order in the narrative and the abandonment of syntactical and grammatical connectives. In his novels, James Joyce explores real people and their lives, for example in Dublin, with "The Dubliners". Amongst his collection of stories, Ulysses stands out: the story follows the life of two ordinary people for a day, paralleled to the wanderings and tribulations of Homer's epic hero in the Odyssey. In this novel, we see one of the greatest examples of revisiting myth. Joyce, as mentioned above,

also uses the stream of consciousness technique and juxtaposes apparently incongruous images in the attempt of showing the chaotic flow of the human mind.

The other very important novelist, Virginia Woolf, defined the difference between the time of the clock, as measurable time, and the time of the mind, which can span over years and go back and forth in time. For instance, in her novels "Mrs. Dalloway" and "To the Lighthouse", the flow of time, "one day" and "two days" respectively, is expanded by the characters' consciousness (Olivotti, 2018).

The stream of consciousness, in literature, was the narrative style that tried to capture the notion of the unconscious, as it represents the uninterrupted flow of thought when one is unaware of thinking. In order to mimic the non-linear way the human brain works, writers focused on some common features when illustrating the stream of consciousness, experimenting with new narrative structures and techniques, such as: the loss of linearity with flashbacks and time shifts, the use of free association, the acceptable repetition, the sensory observation and the strange or inexistent punctuation. The belief that there is no absolute truth, but that the world is created in the act of perceiving it subjectively, results in a shift from the external to the internal world and in the interest in viewing how different people face the same event. The omniscient narrator that represented events in an objective way has now been replaced with direct or indirect interior monologue, which presents the characters' thoughts and feelings in their mind, hence the use of stream of consciousness. The linearity of the language used in literature has been altered and replaced by subjective duration: time is being presented according to the psychological point of view of the characters, as there is no longer an interest for well-built plots, and the characters' personality is revealed through the analysis of their "moments of being", i.e. their stream of consciousness.

Anthony Trollope, a 19th century English novelist, in his work of "Phineas Finn", proposed a representation of the stream of consciousness much too simplistic and outdated for the authors of the 20th century, as it followed a linear progression of ideas: the character, during his train ride, first contemplated his upcoming political duty, then how it would be difficult as many might be against him, then how the situation seemed more dire

than ever, then ... (Womble, 2018). During Joyce's and Woolf's times, Trollope's representation of stream of consciousness would undoubtedly be considered as outdated, too simplistic and direct in depicting the links between ideas. For instance, in the story of Eveline from the Dubliners, Joyce highlights an evolved concept of the stream of consciousness by portraying how the character has an epiphany when she hears a song that reminds of her promise that she would have taken care of her father: "*Down far in the avenue she could hear the street organ playing. She knew the air. Strange that it should come that very night to remind her of the promise to her mother, her promise to keep the home together as long as she could.*" (Joyce, 1992). Another example of a better understanding of the stream of consciousness is offered by Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway: "*For having lived in Westminster--how many years now? over twenty,--one feels even in the midst of the traffic, or waking at night, Clarissa was positive, a particular hush, or solemnity; an indescribable pause; a suspense (but that might be her heart, affected, they said, by influenza) before Big Ben strikes*." (Woolf, 2020). In this extract, the character's heart is associated with the chimes of the clock and the sense of the character's psychological time compared to actual time passing are not in sink, all wrapped around a frame of atypical syntax and sensory features.

6.3 Stream of Consciousness as the Interior Monologue

The experimental novelists, in particular James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, were interested in the representation of the subconscious and in order to portray this, a new literary style emerged, the "interior monologue". The interior monologue aimed to be one of the closest representations of the stream of consciousness in a literary form: it lacks logical and chronological order. The novel makes the reader know what is taking place on the outside through a view of the interior representation in the mind of the character and lacks introductory expressions: consequently, it is up to the reader to interpret whether the event narrated is taking place in the mind of the character or in the plotline. The interior monologue is underlined by continuous interruptions of a flow of thought or narration through the use of comments on other events taking place, which are indeed not the main interest and serve only as the backdrop, thus becoming, to a certain extent, similar to a psychoanalytical session.

The interior monologue can be divided into two categories: Direct and Indirect. The direct interior monologue is of greater complexity, used in novels that aim for a higher literary scope such as "Ulysses", and it is significantly less often found, while the indirect is the preferred choice in most works. Both started from free direct speech and then each witnessed an evolution of its own, they differ primarily in regards of the levels of narration. The indirect interior monologue has two levels of narration, the narrator is in third person and the characters of the story are in first person, therefore having two separate worlds, with two distinct significances. This form of literary encapsulation of the stream of consciousness is more accessible, as the reader is able to anchor themselves in the story by following the third person narrator, which gets interrupted the moment the internal thoughts of the characters are presented. On the other hand, the direct interior monologue, also considered as extreme interior monologue, is composed of a single level of narration: thoughts and events are totally and completely a creation within the mind of the main character, and there is a complete loss of an external narrator. In this last, the exterior is still present, only that it is not presented as separate from the other thoughts. Joyce's "Finnegans Wake" captures these features by bestowing a constant dream like state in which everything is confused according to the flow of thoughts. "*This is the Willingdone hanking the half of the hat of lipoleums up the tail on the buckside of his big white harse. Tip. That was the last joke of Willingdone. Hit, hit, hit! This is the same white harse of the Willingdone, Culpenhelp, waggling his tailoscrupp with the half of a hat of lipoleums to insoult on the hinndoo see- boy*", extract from Finnegans Wake (Joyce, 1939).

While a factual depiction on paper of the stream of consciousness is ultimately impossible, as our minds don't merely think through the use of words but also via images, sounds and feelings, the extreme interior monologue, nevertheless, is the pinnacle and most recent representation of the stream of consciousness in the literary world. By removing the third person narrator, the reader is cast completely into an illustration of reality by means of alternating ideas and interpretations.

The use of stream of consciousness in literature paved the way for a shift in the mentality of narration, which is also seen in the world of film. The focus is no longer on the events themselves, but on the main character and how they face such events. Since individuals react in a different way when posed in front of the same scenario, many books

and movies can be created on the same event while narrating something unique. A love story or a civilization at war changes every time there is a new main character involved, as each person reacts and understands reality in a unique and personal way. In the Disney Pixar film "Finding Nemo", the audience's primary concern is not the eye grabbing actions that take place, but how the two characters, Nemo and his father, are able to grow and use their personality and charisma, hence their psychology and perhaps even stream of consciousness, to face all the numerous challenges (Wawondatu et al., 2024).

Through the stream of consciousness, a new way of storytelling was achieved by allowing the readers to perceive the characters in a more realistic and human way, with the narration of their thoughts, compulsions and feelings. The reader no longer takes the role of an outside observer, but can truly feel part of the narration, understanding and sharing the struggles portrayed by the stream of consciousness of the characters.

7 Conclusion

Stream of consciousness has played an important role in many different disciplines. As outlined in this thesis, through the analysis of this concept in philosophy, psychology and literature, it has contributed to the understanding of human thought.

Each of these three types of human disciplines has contributed insights and discernments behind the notion of stream of consciousness. These three spheres bring to the table diverse understandings of the theme, which, when brought together, paint a great picture of how our minds are able to catapult us into different realities, allowing us to escape, for periods of time, the cruel harsh existence of the world that surrounds us.

On the philosophical scope, William James exemplified the idea that time is greatly influenced by our perception and grip on reality and that we are incapable of perceiving it in chronological order, but rather, as a constant mixture of the past, present and future. Furthermore, Descartes proposed the idea that it is through the stream of consciousness that we can find the ultimate meaning: our existence.

On the psychological level, Freud was the pioneer of psychoanalysis, exclaiming that the subconscious can be comprehended through the stream of consciousness. It is through the free association and interpretation of unconscious thoughts and dreams that the true deep desires and secrets, repressed in the subconscious, reveal themselves.

Writers and authors of the 20th century have contributed to the evolution of the stream of consciousness by representing how the stories people live in their everyday life, when it comes down to personal experience, are far from the simple unravelling of event after event but are complex grasps of reality through an inner dialogue.

In conclusion, exploring the stream of consciousness highlights the deep interconnection between thoughts, emotions, and human perception across various disciplines. Originating with philosophers who have long shaped the trajectory of human thought, this concept evolved into a cornerstone of psychological inquiry and enriched the realms of literature and cinema. While philosophy, psychology, and literature each offer unique perspectives on the phenomenon, their combined contributions are essential for fostering a unified and multidimensional understanding of the stream of consciousness and the intricacies of the human mind.

8 Bibliography

Antrobus S J, Singer L J, Greenberg S. (1966) Studies in the stream of consciousness: Experimental enhancement and suppression of spontaneous cognitive processes. Perceptual and Motor Skills 23(2):399-417

Bowler, R. and Drewery, Claire (2020). 'One Hundred Years of the Stream of Consciousness: Editors' Introduction. Literature Compass, 17 (6), pp 12570.

Bowling, E. L. (1950). What is the Stream of Consciousness Technique? PMLA/Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, 65(4), pp.333–345

Brenner C (1981). Defense and Defense Mechanisms. The Psychoanalytic Quarterly. 50(4) pp 557-569.

Coppola, P., Allanson, J., Naci, L., & Adapa, R. (2022). The complexity of the stream of consciousness. Communications Biology, 5, pp.1173.

Ferenczi, S., & Rank, O. (1986). The development of psychoanalysis. *Classics in Psychoanalysis Monograph Series, Mo 4,* 68.

Fonagy Peter (2010). Psychoanalytic Theories. The Corsini Encyclopedia of Psychology, Wiley Online Library. pp 1-4

Freud, S. (1983). 2. The Interpretation of Dreams. E. Kurzweil & W. Phillips (Ed.), Literature and Psychoanalysis (pp. 29-33). New York Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press.

Harper Kate (2019). Alexander Bain's Mind and Body (1872): An underappreciated contribution to early neuropsychology. Journal of the history of behavioral sciences. 55(2) pp.139-160

Hartmann Heinz (1950) "Psychoanalysis and Developmental Psychology". The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child. 5(1) pp. 7-17

Holland Gill. (1986) "George Henry Lewes and "Stream of Consciousness": The First Use of the Term in English" South Atlantic Review. 51(1), pp. 31-39

Jager, R (1972) The Development of Bertrand Russell's Philosophy. Routledge.

Joyce, J. (1992). Dubliners. Wordsworth Editions.

Joyce, J (1939). Finnegans Wake. London: Faber & Faber Limited.

James, W (1886) The perception of time. The Journal of Speculative Philosophy, Vol. 20(4) pp. 374-407

Lampl-De Groot, J (2017). Ego Ideal and Superego. The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child. 17(1) pp 94-106.

Massimi, Michela (2021) Absolute Space as a Necessary Idea: Reading Kant's Phenomenology through Perspectival Lenses. Online: https://philsci-archive.pitt.edu/id/eprint/19162

McGilvary, E. B. (1907) The stream of consciousness. The Journal of *Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, *4*(9), pp.225-235.

Nass L M (2017). The Superego and Moral Development in the Theories of Freud and Piaget. The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child. 21(1) pp 51-68.

Olivotti, Nicole (2018) "Time, Memory, and Consciousness in Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway, To the Lighthouse, and Between the Acts". Seton Hall University Dissertations and Theses (ETDs). 2546. Online: https://scholarship.shu.edu/dissertations/2546

Rozemond Marleen (1999) Descartes on Mind-Body Interaction: What's the Problem? Journal of the History of Philosophy - Johns Hopkins University Press. 37(3)pp. 435-467

Shulman R, Reiser M. (2014) Freud's Theory of Mind and Functional Imaging Experiments. An Interdisciplinary Journal for Psychoanalysis and the Neurosciences. 6(2) pp 133-142.

Schwitzgebel, E. (2010). Introspection. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy-Stanford.edu Accessed online: 20 Nov 2024. https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/introspection/

Singer, J. L. (1998). Daydreams, the stream of consciousness, and self-representations. In R. F. Bornstein & J. M. Masling (Eds.), *Empirical perspectives on the psychoanalytic unconscious* (pp. 141–186). American Psychological Association.

Wawondatu, N. R. R., Liando, N. V. F., & Lolowang, I. S. . (2024). THE DYNAMICS OF FATHER-SON RELATIONSHIP IN FINDING NEMO MOVIE SCRIPT BY ANDREW STANTON. *JoTELL : Journal of Teaching English, Linguistics, and Literature*, *3*(1), 14-31.

Womble A. P. David (2018) Phineas Finn, the Statistics of Character, and the Sensorium of Liberal Personhood. Novel - A forum on fiction. 51 (1): pp 17–35

Woolf, V. (2020). Mrs Dalloway. Penguin Classics.