



## LINGUISTIC SUBJECTIVITY: THE PHILOLOGICAL STRUCTURE OF 'STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS' IN 20TH-CENTURY BRITISH PROSE

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### Abstract

This article analyzes the linguistic shift from objective narration to subjective internal monologue in the early 20th century. By examining the works of Virginia Woolf and James Joyce, the study investigates how philological innovations—such as the dissolution of standard syntax and the use of "Free Indirect Discourse"—redefined the boundaries of the English novel. The paper argues that these literary techniques were not merely stylistic choices but a philological response to the changing perception of time and human consciousness.

**Keywords:** Stream of Consciousness, Free Indirect Discourse, Linguistic Subjectivity, Modernist Prose, Cognitive Philology, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, Narrative Stylistics.

### 1. Introduction

At the turn of the 20th century, the English language underwent a "fragmentation" within the realm of high literature. Traditional Victorian prose, characterized by linear chronologies and omniscient "God-like" narrators, began to feel insufficient for expressing the complexities of the modern psyche. Philologically, this led to the development of the "Stream of Consciousness" technique. This article examines how the structure of the English sentence was manipulated to mirror the erratic, non-linear nature of human thought.



## 2. The Dissolution of Syntax

In standard English philology, the sentence is the primary unit of meaning, governed by strict Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) order. However, writers like James Joyce in *Ulysses* challenged this stability. By removing punctuation and utilizing "asyndeton" (the omission of conjunctions), Joyce simulated the rapid-fire association of ideas.

\* Linguistic Impact: The breakdown of grammar in these texts forces the reader to participate in the "meaning-making" process, shifting the power dynamic from the author to the reader.

## 3. Free Indirect Discourse (FID)

A critical philological tool in this era was Free Indirect Discourse. This is a third-person narrative style that adopts the tone and "flavor" of a character's internal thoughts without using explicit markers like "he thought" or "she wondered."

\* Example: Instead of saying, "He looked at the clock and thought he was late," the text reads, "He looked at the clock. Good heavens, how late it was!"

This technique allows for a seamless transition between the external world and the internal psyche, creating a "polyphonic" linguistic environment where multiple perspectives coexist.

## 4. Virginia Woolf and the 'Moments of Being'

Virginia Woolf's contribution to English philology lies in her focus on "lyrical prose." In *Mrs. Dalloway*, the language functions like music, using rhythm and repetition to slow down the reader's perception of time. Woolf utilizes "anaphora" (repetition of words at the beginning of clauses) to anchor the reader amidst the shifting perspectives of her characters. Her work demonstrates that the



English language is capable of capturing "the atom as it falls," a metaphor for the fleeting nature of sensory experience.

### **5. Cognitive Philology and Modernism**

Modern scholars often view these literary developments through the lens of Cognitive Philology. This field suggests that the way we structure sentences actually influences the way we perceive reality. The shift toward subjectivity in English literature reflected a broader cultural movement—influenced by Bergson's philosophy of time and Freud's psychoanalysis—where "internal time" became more significant than the "ticking of the clock."

### **6. Conclusion**

The philological evolution of the 20th-century novel represents a peak in the flexibility of the English language. By breaking the rules of traditional grammar and syntax, Modernist writers expanded the expressive potential of English, proving that language is not a static cage but a fluid medium capable of mapping the deepest recesses of the human mind. For today's philologists, these texts remain the ultimate case study in the relationship between linguistic form and human experience.

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