

## THE ART OF INTERIOR MONOLOGUE IN LITERARY TEXTS

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*Abstract:*

This article explores interior monologue, a narrative technique in literary texts that provides direct access to a character's unfiltered thoughts and emotions. Through the use of fragmented syntax and stream-of-consciousness style, interior monologue enhances psychological depth, immerses readers in characters' subjective experiences, and creates a sense of authenticity. Examples from Virginia Woolf's "Mrs. Dalloway" and James Joyce's "Ulysses" demonstrate the power of interior monologue in conveying emotion, immersing readers in characters' minds, and exploring complex themes.

*Key words:* interior monologue, literary text, stream of consciousness, narrative technique, authenticity, emotional depth.

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Interior monologue, also known as stream of consciousness, is a narrative technique used in literary texts to convey the thoughts, feelings, and perceptions of a character in a direct and unfiltered manner. It allows readers to enter the character's mind, providing insights into their inner world and enhancing their understanding of the character's motivations, conflicts, and emotional state.

In the ancient world, several authors demonstrated skill and mastery in developing and utilizing interior monologue. Notable examples include Homer, Apollonius Rhodius, Vergil, Longus, and Xenophon of Ephesus. Homer's use of interior monologue was particularly interesting, combining formulaic behavior with ease and flexibility. Apollonius of Rhodius, Vergil, and Ovid learned from their predecessors and incorporated the technique into their works, often using it as an opportunity to showcase their verbal virtuosity.

At the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century writers gave more importance to subjective consciousness and understood it was impossible to reproduce the complexity of human being using traditional techniques and they utilized a new means of expression. They adopted the interior monologue to represent in a novel the unspoken activity of the mind. Interior monologue is often confused with the stream of consciousness but they differ from each other: In the fact "interior monologue" is verbal expression of a physical phenomenon while in the stream of consciousness is psychic phenomenon itself.

In literary texts, interior monologue often takes the form of extended passages or paragraphs that mimic the flow of the character's thoughts. It can be distinguished from dialogue or regular narration by its lack of punctuation, fragmented syntax, and a stream-of-consciousness style that may include associations, digressions, and non-linear jumps between different thoughts and memories. Interior monologue can serve various purposes in literary texts. It can

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provide psychological depth by revealing the character's innermost thoughts and desires. It can also create a sense of immediacy and intimacy, immersing the reader in the character's subjective experience. By portraying the character's unfiltered thoughts, it can create a sense of authenticity and realism.

Grammar rules are followed, and punctuation is utilized to recreate the sequence of thoughts, memories, feelings, and considerations of the characters. The main characteristics of interior monologue include:

*Verbal expression of a psychic phenomenon:* Interior monologue serves as a verbal expression of a character's inner thoughts and experiences.

*Immediate and distinct from soliloquy and dramatic monologue:* Interior monologue is immediate in nature, setting it apart from soliloquy and dramatic monologue. It does not adhere to conventional syntax and is free from introductory expressions such as "he thought," "he remembered," or "he said."

*Two levels of narration:* Interior monologue involves both an external level of narration, representing the character's external actions and interactions, and an internal level, delving into their thoughts and emotions.

*Lack of chronological order and subjective time:* Interior monologue does not follow a strict chronological order and disregards the presence of subjective time. It can jump between past, present, and future thoughts and memories.

*Disregard for punctuation rules and formal logical order:* Interior monologue may ignore the rules of punctuation and does not adhere to a formal logical order.

There are two distinct variations of interior monologue that can be examined:

1. Direct interior monologue: In this type, the character's thoughts are portrayed without any interference or commentary from the author. The thoughts flow freely from the character's mind, allowing readers to gain direct access to their unfiltered thinking and beliefs. While this approach may sometimes leave readers feeling perplexed, it also has the potential to inspire and provoke deeper insights.

*"I like the blue dress best, she thought."*

Sometimes, we can even leave off the "she thought" part and give it as if the reader is inside the character's head. These thoughts are in the character's language and diction, not the narrator's.

2. Indirect interior monologue: In contrast, the author takes a more selective approach when presenting the character's thoughts. They carefully choose which thoughts to reveal and may even offer commentary or guidance to the reader. This form of interior monologue provides a clearer path for readers to navigate the character's thoughts and allows the author to provide additional insights or interpretations. Simply, direct thoughts become indirect thoughts when we do two things: change from present to past tense, and change from 1st person to 3rd person.

*"She liked the blue dress best, she thought."*

The "she thought" part is still correct, even though it's an indirect thought. And the language is still in the character's voice.

"Mrs. Dalloway" by Virginia Woolf is a prime example of a novel that uses ground-breaking examples of interior monologues. Throughout her works, Woolf pioneered the stream of consciousness style in her delivery of characters' thoughts, opinions, feelings and troubles. For example:

*"She felt very young; at the same time unspeakably aged. She sliced like a knife through everything; at the same time was outside, looking on... far out to sea*

*and alone; she always had the feeling that it was very, very dangerous to live even one day”.*

This is a beautiful quote that evokes a great deal of feeling from the reader. It also helps one imagine what exactly is going on within this character’s mind.

James Joyce’s *Ulysses* is a very interesting example of an author’s experimental use of interior monologues. Throughout this book, Joyce experiments with a variety of new literary techniques. The novel is one of the most important examples of 20th-century novel writing. Consider these lines:

*“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.”*

This stream of consciousness monologue allows readers to hear every word and image that comes into a character’s mind. While not all examples of internal monologues are like this one, writers often turn to Joyce’s skilled composition style for inspiration.

Another example of interior monologue from James Joyce's "Ulysses":

*"She was walking in the road. He had only to beckon. And they would have gone off together, driving straight ahead and they would have been married in a madhouse or a hotel. Anything but this. Anything but this. It was wrong, this concentration upon mere externals of life. The soul should be first and after that all the rest. Love. Yes, he had known love. He had been in love. It had been like a religion. He had believed in love. But why now with her? Why with her?"*

*He could not turn his eyes from the front of the stage. It was his fate. She was the symbol of something. One of those many symbols that we see in life. It was his duty to stand up to her and to say what he felt within. But would she understand him if he did? Would she? He saw her in the light of the stage. It was a pale, cold light. Not the light of love. It was something else. Something that he could not name".*

In this passage, the interior monologue immerses the reader in the character's thoughts, allowing us to witness his struggle with love, duty, and his own feelings. The fragmented syntax and lack of punctuation reflect the character's stream-of-consciousness, as he grapples with conflicting emotions and searches for meaning in his relationship.

In conclusion, interior monologue, also known as stream of consciousness, is a powerful narrative technique in literary texts that grants readers direct access to the inner thoughts and emotions of characters. Through its fragmented syntax and stream-of-consciousness style, interior monologue enhances the psychological depth of characters, immerses readers in their subjective experiences, and creates a heightened sense of authenticity. Virginia Woolf's "Mrs. Dalloway" and James Joyce's "Ulysses" exemplify the profound impact of interior monologue, as they evoke strong emotions, explore complex themes, and offer a glimpse into the intricate workings of the human mind. As a versatile tool in the writer's repertoire, interior monologue continues to captivate readers and enrich the literary landscape with its unique storytelling capabilities.

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