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| Stream of Consciousness |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| The term ‘stream of consciousness’ was first coined by psychologist William James in *The Principles of Psychology* in 1893, when he describes it thusly: ‘consciousness as an uninterrupted ‘flow’: ‘a ‘river’ or a ‘stream’ are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described. In talking of it hereafter, let’s call it the stream of thought, consciousness, or subjective life’ (243). The term quickly came to mean a narrative mode that seeks to give the written equivalent of a character’s thought processes, and is sometimes described in terms of an ‘interior monologue’. As such, it differs from the ‘dramatic monologue’ or ‘soliloquy’ where the speaker addresses the audience or an implied receiver. Stream of consciousness style is often identified by fictional techniques such as lack of punctuation, long and sometimes agrammatical sentences, and a series of unrelated impressions. Stream of consciousness technique tries to represent a character’s general mental state before it is condensed, organized, or edited down into narrative coherence or sense. While stream of consciousness is often read as an avant-garde technique, its aims were to get closer to the ‘reality’ of human thought processes. As a narrative technique, stream of consciousness maintains affiliations with other modernist art forms, such as the visual art of German expressionism, Cubism, and modernist film. |
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| Further reading:  (James) |