MYTH AND PERSONALITY PSYCHOLOGY: THE MANIFESTATION OF COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS MOTIFS IN THE STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE PROTAGONIST

Ashiraliyeva Mamura Faxriddinovna
Assistant lecturer at department of Foreign Languages at Samarkand State Pedagogical Institute, Uzbekistan

Abstract

This thesis examines how mythic motifs rooted in the collective unconscious become legible within stream-of-consciousness narration and thereby shape the psychological portrait of a novel's protagonist. Drawing on Jungian depth psychology, narrative theory and myth studies, the paper argues that the ostensibly idiosyncratic flow of subjective impressions is structured by trans-personal patterns—archetypes, ritual schemas and cyclical temporality—that surface as images, affective surges and intrapsychic dialogues. The aim is to clarify the mechanisms by which such motifs are encoded in interior monologue and free indirect discourse, and to show how they regulate memory, desire, moral conflict and identity formation. Methodologically, the study combines hermeneutic close reading with psychoanalytic and narratological modeling across a small, illustrative corpus of modernist and late-modern texts. The discussion demonstrates that hero-journey sequences, shadow confrontations, anima/animus visitations, sacred-time recursions and trickster displacements reorganize the protagonist's cognition and self-narration, especially at thresholds of crisis and decision. The conclusion highlights implications for literary analysis and for psychology of reading, proposing that stream-of-consciousness fiction functions as a privileged laboratory in which culturally shared mythic programs become phenomenologically available as individual thought.

Keywords

Collective unconscious; archetype; stream of consciousness; interior monologue; mythic motif; narrative identity; Jungian criticism.

Introduction

Stream-of-consciousness narrative is often described as radically individual, presenting the mind as it moves through sensation, memory and association. Yet the mind that speaks in such fiction is never culturally empty. Depth psychology, most influentially Jung's theory of the collective unconscious, posits an inherited layer of patterns sedimented across human history that manifests as archetypal images and narrative programs. Myth studies similarly emphasize the persistence of ritual structures and culture-wide plots within modern storytelling. The paradox, therefore, is that a form designed to foreground singularity frequently reveals trans-personal regularities. Literature resolves this paradox by letting collectively shared motifs supply hidden coherence to the protagonist's interior flux. The result is a psychology on the page in which private thought carries public myth, and where symbolic recurrence interlaces with episodic memory to stabilize identity under conditions of experiential fragmentation.

The study aims to identify how motifs of the collective unconscious are realized in the stream of consciousness of a novel's protagonist and to articulate the psychological functions these motifs perform in organizing affect, choice and self-interpretation during narrative time.

The material comprises representative passages of interior monologue and free indirect discourse from modernist and late-modern novels in which consciousness is the principal scene of action. Rather than establishing claims through author biography or external anthropology, the method is text-immanent and analytic. A hermeneutic procedure selects dense nodes of imagery, recurrent symbols and threshold episodes; a Jungian framework classifies archetypal manifestations; a narratological lens models how these recurrences shape plot time, focalization and voice. The procedure is iterative: hypotheses about archetypal presence are tested against local semantics, emotional tonality and shifts in deictic center. Because stream-of-consciousness fiction often blends recollection with perceptual immediacy, particular attention is paid to temporal markers and to how mythic forms bend chronological order into ritualized cycles.

Close reading indicates that mythic patterns surface when the protagonist confronts liminal situations that exceed ordinary coping scripts. At such thresholds, interior language thickens with symbolic condensation: a stairway becomes an ascent toward a sanctuary; a mirror opens into dialogue with an unfamiliar double; the smell of the sea reawakens an origin scene whose affective charge cannot be exhausted by biographical explanation. These moments are not decorative. They are the grammar by which the psyche renders otherwise inarticulable conflicts. The hero-journey sequence reappears as a micro-plot inside consciousness: a call experienced as anxiety, refusal rationalized as fatigue, unforeseen aid as a stray memory or quotation, crossing of a boundary as a decision crystallized in a single sensory cue, and a return marked by a new equilibrium of self-regard. The stream seems spontaneous, but its propulsion follows an inherited itinerary that guides attention toward transformation.

The shadow enters when suppressed wishes or rejected traits acquire figurative body. In interior monologue, the shadow is audible as a counter-voice that interrupts with sarcasm or temptation, and visible as a recurring image that the protagonist insists on dismissing yet cannot exclude. Narrative time slows around these irruptions; syntax fractures, creating small vortices of repetition through which the text compels a reckoning. Integration becomes legible when the counter-voice is granted limited legitimacy and when metaphors of darkness lose their purely menacing cast. The psyche thus negotiates moral conflict by staging a mythic psychodrama whose actors are facets of the self.

Anima and animus motifs appear as enigmatic visitations that rearrange value hierarchies. The figure is not only erotic; it is epistemic, catalyzing insights that ordinary reasoning cannot secure. In stream-of-consciousness discourse this figure often speaks in citations or hybrid idioms, importing forgotten songs, religious phrases or fragments of folk narrative. The protagonist's cognitive map briefly widens, and choices once framed as practical dilemmas are reframed as calls to wholeness. The effect is measurable in the redistribution of attention: formerly peripheral sensations gain salience, while obsessive loops release their grip.

Trickster dynamics manifest in episodes of comic misrecognition, slips of the tongue and improbable coincidences that rearrange narrative constraints. What looks like chance is narratively functional, for the trickster loosens rigid identifications and permits new combinations of meaning. The protagonist's interior commentary oscillates between

embarrassment and exhilaration, and the plot's next stage becomes possible precisely because the self's borders have been playfully trespassed. The psychological result is increased tolerance for ambiguity and a readiness for creative synthesis.

Underlying these processes is a temporal logic different from linear chronology. Myth introduces sacred time, in which the present folds toward origins and returns the subject to an inaugural scene configured as both catastrophe and promise. Stream-of-consciousness syntax—parataxis, anaphora, free association—renders this logic audible. Repetitions are not failures of control but ritual acts, and leitmotifs serve as mnemonic rites by which identity persists despite the incessant influx of perception. Where biographical explanation ends, cyclical temporality confers continuity. The self that emerges is not merely a sum of experiences but an interpreter positioned within a culture's archive of symbols.

These findings suggest a double movement: collective motifs borrow vitality from private feeling, while private feeling borrows intelligibility from collective motifs. The novel thus becomes an interface where culture and psyche mutually illuminate. For criticism, the implication is to read stream-of-consciousness not only for stylistic innovation but for its diagnostic power as a phenomenology of archetypes. For psychology, the implication is that readers may recognize themselves through mythic resonances even when the text avoids explicit allusion, because the form itself invites archetypal participation.

Stream-of-consciousness narration reveals that the protagonist's most singular thoughts are continuously structured by collective motifs that crystallize at moments of crisis, encounter and decision. Heroic itineraries channel striving into transformation; shadow figures stage ethical negotiation; anima/animus visitations reorganize valuation; trickster events loosen rigid identifications; and mythic temporality sustains identity across fragmentation. What appears as interior noise is, at depth, the speech of culture in the individual, and the individual's creative reply to that speech. Recognizing these dynamics enriches literary interpretation and supports a psychology of reading in which narrative experience becomes a site of symbolic integration.

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