**PROGRAMMA**

**THE ROMANTIC AGE  
Jane Austen**

*Pride and Prejudice*

**Mary Shelley**

*Frankenstein*

*Text 1: “What was I?” (from Chapter 13).*

**THE VICTORIAN AGE**

**The historical background**

**The Literary context**

**Culture**

The Victorian Compromise

**Charles Dickens**

*Oliver Twist*

*Hard Times*

*Text: “A man of realities” (from Book 1, Chapter 2)*

*Text: “Coketown” (from Book 1, Chapter 5)*

**Charlotte Bronte**

*Jane Eyre*

**Robert Louis Stevenson**

*The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*

*Text: “Dr Jekyll’s first experiment” (from Chapter 10)*

**Oscar Wilde**

*The Picture of Dorian Gray.*

*Text: “I would give my soul for that” (from Chapter 2).*

**THE 20th CENTURY – PART I**

The first decades of the 20th century

The Irish Question

**The Literary Context**

**Modernism**

Influences on Modernism: Freud, Bergson, James

The Modernist revolution

The modern novel and the Stream of Consciousness

**James Joyce**

*Dubliners.Text: “The Dead”*

*Ulysses*

*A portrait of the Artist as a Young man*

**JANE AUSTEN**

She was born in 1775, in Steventon, the second daughter of 8 children.

In 1801 her family moved to Bath.In 1805 her father died but women couldn’t inherit his property, so she, her mother and her sister had to move to her brother’s house in Chawton, near her birthplace. Her life was not full of events: she didn’t marry but lived in an intellectual and lively family. She occasionally visited her brothers in London and Bath. She died at the age of 41

She wrote her first work (*Love and friendship*) when she was 14 and at 15 she wrote *A History of England*. Her main works are:

SENSE and SENSIBILITY (1811), PRIDE AND PREJUDICE (1813), MANSFIELD PARK (1814), EMMA (1816), PERSUASION and NORTHANGER ABBEY (published posthumously in 1818).

**Anonymity**: However, **she didn’t write her name on them. They were signed «By a lady».** because writing was still considered an activity for men. In fact, she was the FIRST woman in England to transform writing into her profession. Only when she died, did her brother add a biographical note identifying Jane as the author of her posthumous novels.

**Pride and Prejudice**

***Mister and Mrs. Bennet*** have 5 daughters and no direct male child to inherit their property, so their male cousin Collins will inherit it. For this reason, it’s very important for them to marry their daughters to a rich man.

The occasion arrives when the young bachelor Charles **Bingley** arrives in the area, accompanied by his sisters and his friend Fitzwilliam **Darcy**.

At a ball, **Jane**, the eldest of the Bennet sisters, meets Bingley and they fall in love. There is also an attraction between Darcy and **Elizabeth**, the second Bennet sister, but she is offended by his arrogance.

Later, Elizabeth’s negative opinion about Darcy gets worse when **he and Bingley’s sisters try to separate Bingley from Jane.**

The Bennet’s cousin, Collins, proposes to Elizabeth but she refuses, so he marries Charlotte. While visiting them, Elizabeth meets Darcy. Darcy proposes to her, but he still feels socially superior and for this reason Elizabeth refuses.

Later on, Elizabeth goes to the Bingley’s estate believing that Darcy was not there, but he was. **He surprises her with his gentle behaviour and with his concern for her younger sister Lydia**, who has eloped with the military officer Wickham. Darcy helps them to find the fugitive couple and reunited Bingley and Jane.

**Elizabeth changes her mind about Darcy in judging him too quickly**. He understands that she’s not of a lower level, so they get engaged. The novel ends with Bingley’s wedding with Jane and Darcy’s with Elizabeth.

**Love** - Pride and Prejudice is an invitation to look beyond superficial appearances. In fact, the novel’s original name was “*First impressions*” because we never know if the people’s first impressions are correct or not. The final marriage of Darcy and Elizabeth is a return to their very first meeting, when they felt attraction to each other.

On the contrary, the story between Jane and Bingley, who look in love from the beginning, will stay on a superficial level of attraction until the end.

**Novel of manners -** Austen’s novels are the best example of the “novel of manners”. This type of novel was born in the 18th century and focused on the analysis of social conventions of the middle class and of the gentry. They are set in the countryside; the characters are rich people who interact at tea parties, dinners and balls.

**Themes** - Her main interest was the POSSIBILITY of WOMEN to have SOCIAL PROGRESS.

The main theme was the CONTRAST BETWEEN EMOTION/ROMANTIC LOVE and RIGID SOCIAL CODES, set in a limited microcosm of society.

**Style**

* The novels were set in SMALL COMMUNITIES, in MICROCOSMS. The themes were self-realisation, prejudice, social conventions and class prejudices.
* Jane Austen looks at people’s psychology and behaviours and explains them in her novels.
* Austen put her characters under a lens and observed them while they interacted. The focus was not on their manners, but on how the characters REVEALED themselves through them.
* She also used long narrative and scenic descriptions and builds the characters through DIALOGUE.
* Austen used the FREE INDIRECT SPEECH, which means there was a 3rd person narrator, but with the advantages of a 1st person.
* Austen used IRONY to highlight social hypocrisy, to criticise how women were described in sentimental and in Gothic novels.
* Another typical element was the HAPPY ENDING, generally the wedding of the protagonists of the story. The happy ending came after a series of events that made women face prejudices and social conventions. So the wedding was a PERSONAL DECISION and the sign of the character’s GROWTH and MATURITY.

**MARY SHELLEY**

Mary Shelley (1797-1851) was the daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft, a writer and forerunner of the feminist movement, and William Godwin, a philosopher and writer. She had showed literary talent since she was a child.

In 1812 she met Percy Shelley. He was married, but they escaped together. When Percy Shelley’s wife committed suicide in 1816, they got married. They lived in Switzerland for a while and then in Italy with their son. In 1822 Percy Shelley died while sailing; Mary returned to England and wrote novels to live. She died in 1851.

**Frankenstein**

At the age of 19, she wrote *Frankenstein*. In 1816 Percy and Mary Shelley lived with lord Byron and the physician W. Polidori at Lake Geneva. One evening, Byron suggested to write a ghost story. Mary wrote this story inspired by a nightmare she had that night. But she didn’t complete it until they left Switzerland.

**The Plot** - The story is set at the end of the 18th century.

It is told by 3 different narrators:

1. Robert Walton, an explorer going to the North Pole
2. Victor Frankenstein, a scientist who wanted to know the secret to create life
3. The monster, Frankenstein’s creation.

The story is written in the form of LETTERS, that Walton wrote to his sister and go back to the Monster’s creation, Frankenstein’s abandon and many deaths; but we also find letters, notes, journals which document the monster’s emotions.

The story starts with Captain Robert Walton writing a letter to his sister. During a voyage to the North Pole, the crew save a man from the water: it is doctor Victor Frankenstein.

He tells his story: he was obsessed with studies about natural wonders and finds the secret to give life to non-living matter.

He creates a humanoid who is very tall, has watery eyes and yellow skin. He is afraid and escapes. When he comes back, the monster has escaped.

After the trauma of this experience, Victor stays 4 months in recovery at the hospital. When he leaves the hospital, he finds out his little brother has been killed and sees the monster on the crime place.

The monster asks Victor to hear his story; so, from this moment on, it is the monster who speaks.

The monster tells that everybody was afraid of him and his experience in trying to approach a family living in a cottage where he had lived.

**So he asks Victor to create a female companion for him. If Victor doesn’t accept, the Creature will kill all his friends and loved ones.**

Victor is afraid of creating another creature, so he doesn’t finish it. When the Monster sees it, he kills his friend and blames Victor. Then, he also kills Victor’s wife on their first wedding night.

Victor follows the Creature up to the North Pole, but he collapses.

Captain Walton reconstructs the story.

**Style** - Frankenstein is not only a GOTHIC NOVEL (horror elements and setting), but also an early example of SCIENCE FICTION.

**Themes** - The main theme is Frankenstein’s PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE**: he tries to go beyond human limits** but this only brings death and destruction. It is similar to *Faust*, who sold his soul to the Mephistopheles to have knowledge, but also to PROMETHEUS (in fact the book’s subtitle is *The Modern Prometheus*), the figure in Greek mythology who stole Zeus’s fire: humans benefited from it, but he was chained to a rock forever. **In fact Frankenstein is punished** for what he did.

Other important themes are NEGLECT and DEVELOPMENT: the huge monster is rejected by everybody, especially his creator (that he calls ‘father’) and is like a neglected child. He has to grow up alone and educate himself.

The novel is the description of the monster’s development. The creature realizes that **a child without parents becomes a monster**. He says that he was born good but was obliged by the others to become evil.

**CHARLES DICKENS**

Charles Dickens was born in Hampshire in 1812 but when he was young, he moved to London. There, at the age of 12, he was sent to work 12 hours a day in a factory. His education up to that moment was scarce, but the factory owner, who was his father’s friend, gave him free lessons. Later, the family had to go to debtors’ prison, but when his grandmother died, their situation got better.

Dickens obtained a formal education and in 1827 he started to work, first as a solicitor and then as freelance journalist. He started writing papers anonymously.

The success of his first works led him to write novels, that he wrote until his death.

He died during after a tour in America in 1870.

**Dickens’s novels**

1. REALISM and DENOUNCE - Dickens’s poverty during his childhood influenced his works and his writing. In fact, the environment and the people who lived there are important. He described the streets and the slums of London in detail. He denounced the terrible conditions of the Victorian age. However, he only criticised society but didn’t propose any revolutionary changes. In general, in his works good overcomes evil.
2. CHARACTERS – He created unforgettable characters, but they are caricatures and focus on some features: avidity (for ex. Scrooge in A Christmas carol), pride (Mr. Bounderby in Hard Times), evil (Bill Sikes in Oliver Twist) or good. So, they are flat characters, either all good or all bad.
3. His novels were full of sentimentality and melodrama. DIALOGUE and IRONY were also important.
4. His novels were sold in INSTALMENTS: Families could buy an instalment (a Chapter) of the book each week. They read it together in the evenings, discussed it and imagined the next week’s instalment, similarly to soap operas today.

**Oliver Twist**

O. Twist is the first English novel focusing on a child. It is set in the backstreets and slums of London and describes the terrible conditions of workhouses, the exploitation of children and criminality. Its major elements are: poverty, hunger, murder and blackmail, but they are alternated with moments of comedy.

**The plot** - **Oliver Twist** is a foundling. He lives in an orphanage until the age of 9. Then he is sent into a workhouse to work for his food. One day, he shocks everybody by asking for more food. As a consequence, he is sold for 5 pounds to work as an apprentice for an undertaker. This decision is not better and he decides to go to London.

In London, he makes friends with the Artful Dodger, a pick-pocket, who takes him to his home, **Fagin’s** den. Fagin is the head of a homeless gang and trains boys to steal for him. He is helped by the robber (=*ladro*) Bill Sikes and his girlfriend, the prostitute Nancy.

Oliver is forced to work for Fagin as a robber and one night, he is shot while trying to steal from a rich family. The lady of the house, Mrs. Maylie, sees that he’s just a boy and decides to take care of him. Nancy visits Mrs. Maylie to help Oliver.

With the help of **Mr. Brownlow,** who had become Oliver’s friend, they find out Oliver’s true identity and he is adopted by Brownlow. Nancy is killed by Bill Sikes for helping Oliver, but he also dies, while Fagin is captured by the police and hanged. → Oliver is saved and the villains are punished.

**Hard Times**

**The plot -** Hard Times is a story set in the fictional town of “Coketown” (coke is a type of coal), modelled on the industrial cities of the period.

**• Thomas Gradgrind** is the headmaster of a school. He is a PRACTICAL man who only believes in facts and figures. He suppresses the imagination of his children **Louisa** and **Tom**, and of the students at his school.

• In accordance with her father, Louisa marries **Josiah Bounderby**, who is 30 years older than her, because her brother Tom works at Bounderby’s firm.

• Louisa is unhappy with her marriage and is distracted by a politician who arrives at Coketown, **James Harthouse**.

• In the meantime, Tom robs his employer and tries to blame an honest and innocent man.

• When Harthouse tries to seduce her, Louisa goes to her father for protection and Gradgrind understands that in reality, his rational world with no feelings is limited.

• At the end, Louisa and Harthouse get separated and Tom is discovered and has to leave the country. Hard Times: Themes & Features • Hard Times is a critique of the negative effects of industrial society where people want to have material gain and efficiency and not human qualities. •

**Realism** 🡪Coketown is realistic in the depiction of the monotonous environment and of the poverty of working classes. • Dickens’s descriptions give the social and psychological map of the situation because they perfectly represent the difference between social classes.

**Humour** 🡪 There is a strong sense of humour and many scenes are described as theatrical. He captures the right rhythms and the scenes include different types of speech, having a comic effect. Characters are taken from real life but transformed by COMIC EXAGGERATION.

**Utilitarianism** 🡪 Thomas **Gradgrind** was probably based on the Utilitarian leader **James Mill**. Utilitarianism was a political and economic doctrine based on the UTILITY, i.e. the possibility of making happy the greatest number of people. It was based on statistics and had no sensitivity for the individuals. In education, they promoted a system that was considered mechanical and arid → This system is represented in the famous scene of *Hard Times* in which T. Gradgrind interrogates his student Sissy.

**CHARLOTTE BRONTE**

Charlotte had 2 sisters and a brother. They were children of an Irish clergyman. They lived in a lonely and isolated place and were educated at home.

After working as a governess, Charlotte went to Brussels to learn French and then worked there.

In 1854 she married, but her husband died one year later, at 39.

She published *Jane Eyre* in 1847 and it was scandalous because it focused on the passion of a respectable woman.

**Jane Eyre**

**Jane Eyre** tells the story of an orphan girl who grows up in a hostile house: she spent her childhood with her aunt and then at a boarding school for the poor.

She becomes a governess (like Charlotte) to a child at the home of the rich **Mr. Rochester.**

She falls in love with Rochester and they are about to marry but just before the wedding she finds out that he is already married and that his crazy wife, **Bertha Mason**, is hidden in the attic.

Jane doesn’t want to be Rochester’s lover, so she leaves him. At the end, when Berta dies after **burning their house**, Jane goes back to Rochester (who has become blind) and also gets an inheritance.

**Jane** - During the Victorian Age, the woman was seen as the angel of home.

So Jane Eyre was a new kind of heroine: she is an INDEPENDENT and UNCONVENTIONAL woman. Jane fights alone and improves her situation. It is considered a BILDUNGSROMAN (there is the development of the character) because Jane learns to control passion and gives more importance to reason.

This character leaves place to interpretations:

* She represents Charlotte Bronte and her desire to be loved and to go beyond the roles attributed to women at that time;
* She criticises society, that gives few opportunities to women who were educated but poor.

**Rochester** – He is also a particular hero: he is hard, rough and not handsome, not the typical romantic hero. Because of this dark and mysterious appearence, he is fascinating. He reveals to Jane his true personality: he is very sensitive and thoughtful.

**Bertha** is presented as mad, aggressive and dangerous for the others and for herself: in fact at the end of the story she sets fire to the house.

In the novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) the writer Jean Rhys re-wrote Bertha’s story and presents Bertha as a Creole born in the Caribbean.

**Themes and style** - Jane Eyre is not a Gothic novel in the complete sense of the word (Gothic novels were set in past lands and presented supernatural, mystery and terror elements, like Horace Walpole’s *Castle of Otranto*), but has some elements of the Gothic novel:

1. There is a mystery about Rochester’s past;
2. There is a ghostly atmosphere in his house;
3. There is the appearance of a fortune-teller;
4. There is the secret of Bertha in the attic.
5. Also the **love** between Jane and Rochester can be considered a typically Gothic element.

**ROBERT L. STEVENSON**

Robert Louis Balfour Stevenson was born in Edinburgh in 1850. He gained a Law degree but never practised. He had health problems, so he left Scotland and never went back. At the age of 30 he married Fanny Osbourne, who was American and divorced and had 2 children and they lived in California with little money.

In 1883 he published his first novel, *Treasure Island*, written for young people but also popular with adults. 3 years later, he published *The Strange case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.

From 1888 he started a series of journeys around the Pacific Islands with his family to benefit from the good climate and settled in Samoa, where he died of stroke in 1894.

**Works** - The two most important Stevenson’s novels are *The strange case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and *Treasure Island.*

The two novels are very different but they have the same theme: the IMPOSSIBILITY of identifying and SEPARATING GOOD and EVIL:

John Silver in *Treasure Island* is at the same time a COURAGEOUS FRIEND and a CUT-THROAT.

**The strange case of Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde**

Dr Jekyll is a mix of good and evil and Hyde dominates because of his moral weakness.

*Narrators*

The history is narrated from different points of view: mainly from Utterson’s viewpoint (who is Dr. Jekyll’s friend); in the last 2 chapters from Lanyon’s and Jekyll’s.

**The plot -** **Dr. Jekyll** is a scientist who invents a potion that can separate the good and evil parts of human mind. He drinks the potion and becomes another man: **Mr. Hyde.** Mr Hyde is small and primitive and represents evil. He gradually develops his own life and becomes more dominant than Jekyll. He commits evil deeds, even murder.

When the effects of the potion wear off (disappear) Mr Hyde becomes again the respectable Jekyll.

Horrified by his materialised dark side, Jekyll decides to end this experiment by killing Mr. Hyde but by doing so, he kills himself.

The respectable and generous London doctor Henry Jekyll represents good, while Mr Hyde represents the evil that is hidden behind the surface of every man (in fact the surname Hyde reminds the verb ‘to hide’, *nascondere*).

So the 2 characters are a symbol of **the relationship of man with good and evil** and of the constant conflict between the two.

This also represents the spirit of the time, **Victorian Age.** In this period there was the Victorian compromise and a dual morality: the upper class hid their desires and primitive instincts under an appearance of respectability.

**OSCAR WILDE**

LIFE AND WORKS

Oscar was born in Dublin in 1854 and attended the Trinity College and then in Oxford. During this period he was influenced by the **ideas of AESTHETICISM** of John **Ruskin** – who was lecturing in art – and Walter **Pater** and he began to write. Then he became the spokesman for the school of ‘*Art for Art’s sake*’.

He was an eccentric **dandy** and was famous for his wit and aphorisms.

In 1882 he gave lectures in America and when he arrived in New York he said “I have nothing to declare but my genius”. In Paris he met Zola, Hugo, Balzac and Mallarmé. In 1882 he married Constance Lloyd and had 2 children and his popularity increased and culminated in 1895, when he published the play *The Importance of Being Earnest*. However, that year, he was accused of **homosexual offence** and was **arrested** and kept for two years at the Reading Jail.

When he was released, he was a broken man. He spent the rest of his life in Italy and France and died in poverty in Paris in 1900.

**Works**: In 1881 – His first volume of poems

1891 – Essays and other stories and his most famous novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

1892-5 – His greatest success was achieved through his comedies, like *Salomé* and *The importance of being Earnest*.

In prison, he wrote *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* and his prose confession *De Profundis*, a letter to his lover Alfred Douglas, that he called Bosie.

AESTHETICISM IN O. WILDE

Wilde believed in Walter Pater’s theory of Aestheticism. This theory stated that **the meaning of life was in beauty and art**. Their motto was *Art for Art’s sake*. This meant that a work of art is important for humankind *per se*. It has no other purpose than its own beauty and perfection; it didn’t have any moral or social functions.

THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY

**Plot.**

There are 3 main characters: **Henry Wotton, Basil Hallward and Dorian Gray.**

Lord **Henry Wotton** becomes the mentor for a young and beautiful boy, **Dorian Gray**.He teaches him how to live in London and makes him understand his beauty.

His friend **Basil** Hallward paints Dorian’s portrait. Dorian understands that his beauty will fade, while the painting will always be beautiful. He expresses the wish to stay beautiful forever (V. ESTRATTO). Later, he realises that the portrait begins to absorb the consequences of his terrible actions, while he is still beautiful (handsome).

Dorian begins to frequent the theatre and meets an actress, called **Sybil Vane,** who falls in love with him. She stops acting to be with him but he cruelly refuses her. When Dorian looks at his portrait, he notices that his face an expression of cruelty. He goes back to Sybil and finds out that she had killed herself.

Henry Wotton pushes him to enjoy the different aspects of a life of vice and sensual gratification. Years later, Dorian is completely corrupted and evil, but still looks like when he was young.

He shows the older Basil the changes in the portrait and Basil warns him that he will have to pay for his moral decline. To keep the secret of the portrait, Dorian kills Basil. Dorian also has to kill other people to keep the secret. The portrait becomes more and more ugly and Dorian decides to start a new life and destroys the portrait. But in doing so, he kills himself. The portrait goes back to its original aspect, while Dorian becomes an old disgusting man.

EXTRACT

The extract describes the moment in which Basil Hallward finished Dorian’s portrait. Henry Wotton said that it was one of the most beautiful modern works of art. Dorian at the portrait and realised how handsome he was. Then, he started thinking about the moment when he would become old, his face wrinkled and his eyes and hair colourless and tears came to his eyes. Basil Hallward asked him if there was something wrong with the painting.

Looking at the portrait, Dorian said «How sad it is», because he would get old, while the picture would stay beautiful forever. He added he would give everything to stay beautiful while the portrait becomes old, even give his soul. In fact, this is what will happen.

THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY AND AESTHETICISM.

The elements of Aestheticism are contained in:

1. The Preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*
2. *And in the plot of The Picture of Dorian Gray.*

1) The Preface is considered the manifesto of the Aesthetic movement and expresses Wilde’s idea of art. It contains many reflections on art, such as:

* The artist is creator of beautiful things
* There is no moral or immoral book. Books can only be well written or badly written.
* The Artist has no ethical sympathies.
* An artist can express everything
* Vices or virtues are material for art
* Diversity of opinion about a work of art demonstrates that it is new, complex and vital.

2) In the book, Dorian is an example of **hedonism** (it means that pleasure is the most important thing in life) because he dedicates his life to the pleasure of the senses, without morality. The novel shows that it’s wrong to sell your soul and to be narcissist and that art can make our life better, but not substitute it!

There are some parts of the book which express some ideas of Aestheticism, for example:

1. Basil and Wotton start the novel with a debate about beauty and appearance, which have become the ultimate values.
2. To seduce Dorian into his world, Henry gives him a **YELLOW BOOK**, probably a copy of Huysmans’s “*À rebours*”, a central text for Aestheticism where the protagonist surrounds himself of precious objects, sounds and perfumes.

Dorian considers his fascination for evil as a part of his life of pleasure. **He rejects the utilitarian values of industrialised society through the cult of art and in this, he represents Wilde’s thought**.

**MODERNISM**

**Socio-historical background**

Modernism is a period of great changes in literature and Arts in Europe and America starting after 1910 and flourishing in the 1920s and 1930s.

It was born because the violence and destruction of World War I caused a sense of instability, and traditional values started to fade and people didn’t have a clear reference point. The artists feel alone and misunderstood and express their inner self.

**What happened during the World War I?**

In July 1914 *World War I*broke out. France, Russia and Britain sided with Serbia against Austria and Germany. After the declaration of war, King George changed his German name of *Hannover* for the English name *Windsor.*

Before the World War I there was the culmination of the processes that characterized the Victorian Age, such as:

* Industrialization and new technical innovations;
* The growth of population and urban spaces;
* The extension of transport network.

**The Irish Question**

Moreover, in England there was the Irish Question: the population of Ireland was divided between the ***Unionists***, who wanted to stay united with England, and ***Republicans***, who wanted to have an independent Parliament. On ***Easter Monday 1916*** a group of Republicans organized a revolt in Dublin. This revolt was violently suppressed but was known as ***Easter Rising.*** In 1918 the **Sinn Fein** party proclaimed an **Irish Republic** and a Civil war started. The war ended in 1921 and in 1922 the **Irish Free State** was born, excluding Ulster, which remained part of the United Kingdom

**Features of Modernism**

Modernism was influenced by the theories of scholars like Freud, Bergson, Einstein and William James.

1. According to **Freud**, the development of our personality is influenced by the **unconscious**, the hidden part of ourselves that men can’t dominate. To analyze the unconscious Freud gave great importance to the **interpretation of dreams** and to the **free association of thoughts** 🡪 IMPORTANT because Modernist characters do free associations of thoughts.
2. The philosopher **Bergson** distinguished between the 1) mathematical *time* of science (OBJECTIVE) and the 2) time of the mind, which is lived in a personal way and changes from one person to another (SUBJECTIVE), or from one situation to another, that he called «**duration**». Duration is the way we experience the world moment by moment.
3. **Albert Einstein** elaborated **the theory of relativity.** He demonstrated that time is relative, because it depends on the viewpoint and the circumstances. With Einstein’s theory, the idea of an objective reality was put in doubt.
4. The psychologist **William James** coined the expression *Stream of consciousness* to indicate «*the continuous flow of thoughts and sensations that characterizes the human mind»*.

The result is that there is a break with the literary tradition of the 19th century, in fact Modernism is characterized by these features:

* The artists try ***new experimental forms of expression.***
* The description of reality is **subjective**; the truth is fragmentary and relative.
* They represent **modern urban life**;
* Sometimes they use ***primitive myths*** (it’s a way to create order out of the chaos of the modern world).

From a stylistic point of view, Modernist novels break with the tradition:

* The *omniscient narrator disappeared* and there was direct presentation of character’s thoughts, feelings and memories;
* *The chronological order of events and the plot disappeared* because there was the inner reality of the characters, their perceptions.

Trying to represent the “stream of consciousness” introduced by Freud, Modernist writers developed new form of writing, **INTERIOR MONOLOGUE**.

ATTENTION !

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS | is the psychic phenomenon itself, the activity of the mind. |
| INTERIOR MONOLOGUE | is the writing technique used to express the *stream of consciousness* of the novels’ characters. It is the VERBAL EXPRESSION of a PSYCHIC, MENTAL PHENOMENON. The character’s thoughts flow freely, not interrupted by external events. |

Interior monologue can be distinguished in 2 types:

1. **Direct interior monologue (or free direct speech)** is the **direct** presentation of a character’s stream of consciousness without the guiding presence of an author or narrator. There is free association; thoughts don’t follow a logical or linear pattern, like our natural mental process; there no punctuation; the narrator disappears; the characters’ thoughts can go back and forwards in time: there is no chronological order, but a **subjective time**, there are NO **introductory expressions** like ‘he thought, he remembered, he said’.

An example is Molly’s monologue in the final chapter of Joyce’s *Ulysses* (chapter 28), where no external element interrupts Molly’s flow of thoughts.

1. **Indirect interior monologue (or free indirect speech)** is the indirect presentation of character’s thoughts because it is filtered through the voice of a narrator (for example with «he said», «he thought»…).
2. Sometimes there can be the presence of **two levels of narration**: one external to the character’s mind, the other internal. There are jumps from past to present **but** they are put in order and in comprehensible English by the author/narrator. The author is present within the narration with **descriptions, comments and introductory phrases** to guide the reader through the narration; the **character stays fixed in space** while his/her consciousness moves freely in time; everything happens in **the present** in the character’s mind.

**James Joyce**

**LIFE**

James Joyce was born in 1882 in Dublin, in a large Catholic family. He received excellent education at Jesuit colleges and then at University College, where he graduated in Modern Languages in 1902, studying French, Italian and Norwegian.

He became intolerant of the Catholic religion and the provincialism of Dublin, so he moved to Paris to study Medicine. He dedicated to writing poems and prose sketches but had to go back to Dublin to assist his dying mother.

In 1904 he met Nora Barnacle, who remained his life companion and traveled around Europe with him: they went to Paris, Zurich and finally Pula and Trieste. In Trieste, he worked as English teacher at Berlitz school, where he met the Italian novelist Italo Svevo. In 1905 he finished his short story collection, ***Dubliners***, although *(nonostante)* it was only published in 1914.

**At the outbreak *(scoppio)* of the First World War, he went with his family to Zurich, where he started to write *Ulysses*.** It was first published in France in 1922 because it had been considered obscene and censored in England. In 1923 he started *Finnegans Wake* (published in 1939). Although he was almost blind *(cieco),* he continued writing.

With the outbreak of the **Second World War**, in 1940, Joyce went from France to Zurich, where he died in 1941.

**DUBLINERS**

Joyce’s first short stories were published in 1914 in a collection called *Dubliners*. They are a realistic portrait of the lives of ordinary people in Dublin and the city is the protagonist of the novel.

The 15 stories are organized in 4 groups, which correspond to the phases of life:

1. Childhood
2. Adolescence
3. Maturity
4. Public Life: political, artistic and religious.

The protagonists come from all classes: maids *(governanti, cameriere),* music teachers, clerks *(impiegati),* students etc. but Joyce focuses on specific moments of their lives that at first, seem everyday activities, but then become special because they are moments of **self-awareness** *(consapevolezza di sé).*

**Paralysis** = A recurrent theme in the stories is the **feeling of paralysis** *(sensazione di paralisi)* that many of the characters have. It is the result of feeling tired of a narrow *(ristretto)* cultural and social context. This feeling is also in the relationships, which are conditioned by repressive religious and moral codes. In fact, Joyce defined Dublin “**the centre of paralysis**”.

Paralysis is the consequence of a frenetic and impersonal city, the frustrating consequence of an unsatisfying job, of an unsuccessful marriage or absence of friendship, a life that they can’t change. In the stories, the protagonists have a desire but they must renounce to it, because the circumstances (family, culture, religion) make it impossible.

**Epiphany =** is a SUDDEN REVELATION during the character’s life. It’s a moment of spiritual awakening *(risveglio),* when feelings come together and produce a new awareness *(=consapevolezza).*The characters understand the situation in which they live but passively continue with their lives as before.

**Style =** Joyce uses an **external narrator**, but the stories are told from the point of view of the main character.

Joyce uses the **interior monologue, both *direct* and *indirect***, so the readers are directly inside the character’s mind. Every story is told from the perspective of one character.

He uses the technique of the **Free indirect Speech.** It is a **third-person narration** which uses some of the characteristics of third-person but with the essence of **first-person direct speech.**

--> The character's voice is partly mediated by the voice of the author.

All the events take place in Dublin, which is not only a setting. The spirit of the city is the link between the characters. In fact, some characters in one story can be mentioned in another story, creating an interconnection in the narrative

*THE DEAD (contenuto in Dubliners)*

*The Dead* is the last short story in *Dubliners*.

The plot – It starts with an Epiphany party at the house of 2 old unmarried sisters, Miss Kate and Miss Julia, who are the aunts of the protagonist, **Gabriel Conroy.** He and his wife **Gretta** are guests at this party.

There is the representation of the Irish microcosm, its traditions, the different generations, religious and political beliefs and social classes.

**After the party,** Gabriel goes back to their hotel and remembers his best moments with Gretta. When they arrive at the hotel, he realises that she is crying.

He asks why she’s so sad and she answers it’s because of a song heard at the party, which reminded her of her first lover, **Michael Furey** who **“died for her”,** so she tells him their story. She had had an epiphany.

When Gretta falls asleep, Gabriel looks outside the window, where the snow is falling. He too has an epiphany. He realises the insignificance of his life, that everybody will fade *(sparire)* and be forgotten *(saranno dimenticati)* and buried *(sepolti)* under the snow, and that his love for Gretta has always been shallow *(=superficiale*) if compared to Micheal’s.

**Time is subjective:** hearing a song, Gretta stops on the stairs and remembers her youth and it’s as if time were stopped. Gretta’s auditory epiphany corresponds to Gabriel’s visual epiphany: while watching the snow falling, he reflects on the insignificance of life.

**ULYSSES**

This work takes its name from the protagonist of Homer’s classical epic poem *Odyssey*, which tells the travels and adventures of **Ulysses** to go back to his native island, ***Itaca***, and his family, his wife **Penelope** and his son **Telemachus**. In fact, there are many parallels between these 2 works.

While the *Odyssey* takes place in many years, the actions in Ulysses take place in a single day, the 16th of June 1904 (the date of Joyce’s first walk with his future wife).

**Content** = There is no real plot, but **18 episodes** which correspond to the adventures in the Odyssey. They take place in different places in Dublin.

*“Ulysses”* is modelled on Homer’s “*Odyssey”* and is divided into three parts:

1) The first part is about **Stephen Dedalus** who, like Telemachus**,** goes in search of a home and of a father, that he finally finds in **Leopold**.

2) The second part is about the wanderings *(=vagheggi, giri)* of **Leopold Bloom**, which are parallel to those of Homer’s Ulysses. At midnight, Leopold **rescues** *(=salva)* Stephen from a brothel *(=bordello)* and takes him home with him.

3) Finally, in the third part Leopold and Stephen talk about several subjects, while **Molly**, who corresponds to Ulysses’s wife, Penelope, is already in bed. Later, Stephen leaves and Leopold falls asleep. In the early hours Molly, who unlike Penelope is **unfaithful** to her husband, meditates on her lover and on Leopold and eventually decides to give her husband another chance.

**Myth** - Although Joyce used the epic structure of Homer’s *Odyssey*, Ulysses is a **reworking of a myth**. In fact, while in the *Odyssey* there is a celebration of the mythic, legendary and heroic, Ulysses is a ‘modern epic’ in which Joyce stresses the absence of heroism, ideals and love in the modern world.

**Style** - The formal aspect of Ulysses, however, is much more important than its content. Joyce, in fact, adopted **different narrative techniques**, some of which are very **experimental**, such as the *stream of consciousness* narrative technique, which reproduces the CHAOTIC FLOW of the characters’ thoughts and the *free association of ideas*.

However, in Ulysses there are also

* third person narration,
* dialogue, and
* the language is also very experimental:

He invented **new words** or deformed them; he used **puns** and **onomatopoeia**.

**THE PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN**

On his 22nd birthday, 2 February 1904, Joyce began a realist **autobiographical** novel, *Stephen Hero.* He worked on the book until 1905 when he moved to Trieste. Then he worked on the stories that made up *Dubliners*, but Joyce continued to work on *Stephen Hero*.

He completed 25 of the 63 intended chapters but in 1907 he abandoned this work, and began a complete revision of the text and its structure, producing what became *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

**Plot** = Stephen attends the first year of the Jesuit Clongowes College. He is intellectually gifted but suffers the ridicule of his classmates while he learns the schoolboy codes of behaviour. The difference between Stephen and the other boys is underlined in the rugby matches described.

At a Christmas dinner he understands the social, political and religious tensions in Ireland because of a fight between some members of his family.

When he is back to Clongowes, some boys are caught in homosexual acts and the Jesuits use corporal punishment. Stephen is strapped when one of his instructors believes he has broken his glasses to avoid studying. However, he finds the courage to complain to the Rector and feels a sense of triumph.

Later, Stephen's father gets into debt and the family goes to live in Dublin. Stephen can't return to Clongowes.

He goes to *Belvedere College*, where he excels and becomes a class leader. Stephen spends his money and begins to see prostitutes, and distance grows between him and his drunken father.

Stephen's class participates in a religious retreat, where he listens to a sermon about guilt, punishment and and returns to the church and religion. He consides becoming a priest but has a crisis of faith. Along *Dollymount Strand* he sees a girl wading the water, and has an **epiphany**: he desires to find a way to express her beauty in his writing.

He goes to University College in Dublin, Stephen loses faith in the institutions around him: Church, school, politics and family. His father berates him and his mother tells him to return to the Church. Stephen concludes that Ireland is too restricted to express himself as an artist, so he decides to leave.

**Style** = Stephen Dedalus's childhood is recounted using vocabulary that changes as he grows, in a voice that is not his own but knows his feelings.

* The reader can feel Stephen's fears and feelings as he comes to terms with the world. This is told in a series of episodes which are not always clearly connected.
* The novel mixes **third-person narrative** with **free indirect speech.** The narrator does not judge and comment.
* There is **minimal dialogue** until the final chapter. In this chapter, for example, there is a debate between Stephen, Davin and Cranly in which Stephen discusses his complex aesthetic theory.
* Joyce also uses **first-person narration** for Stephen's diary entries in the concluding pages of the novel.

**SPORT scenes =**

1) In the **first** scene, all the boys are playing and Stephen is described as thinner and smaller than the other boys who play football (rugby). He pretends to play because the Rector is watching, he is about to cry and he looks forward to the end. Then, Body Kickham is introduced, a guy who ridiculed him. This scenes underlines how Stephen felt inadequate and inferior compared to his peers.

2) In the **second** scene, the same boys appeared smaller to him. But not because he had gained self-confidence, but because one of them had broken his glasses in an accident. This underlines once again the fact that he was physically inferior and a bit "awkward". The boys' attention is drawn by the cricket's championship.

I**n both cases, sport represents the boys' main interest and hobby and some technical terms, images and sounds referred to football and cricket are used.**