

# 11 feb 2021 - Modernism

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## The interior monologue

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In order to translate the working of the mind modernist novelists adopted the interior monologue. There are two types of interior monologue

1. indirect interior monologue
2. direct interior monologue

### Indirect interior monologue

In the **indirect interior monologue** the character thoughts are still filtered by the guiding presence of a narrator, that is anyway a neutral figure; it is not the omniscient narrator of the Victorian age. It is easier to read, because the narrator provides the reader with some explanations and descriptions and comments that help the reader understand the plot. Probably the main modernist writer who adopted the indirect interior monologue is **Virginia Woolf**.

### Direct interior monologue

On the contrary, in the **direct interior monologue** the character thoughts are directly given to the reader, without the guiding presence of a narrator. That's why it is more difficult to read. One of the main authors adopting this, is James Joyce. We can make a further distinction within the direct interior monologue:

- direct interior monologue with two levels of narration
- direct interior monologue with only one level of narration

Direct interior monologue with **two levels** of narration is characterized by the presence of an internal time related to the character's mind, but we also have an external time related to the events that take place during the character's flow of thoughts.

In the direct interior monologue with only **one level** of narration there is only the internal time of the mind, without any external event interfering with the character's thoughts; in this last case, there can be an even more extreme form, which is the

**extreme interior monologue**, where the characters thoughts are presented through dreams. In this case we have the climax of *free association of ideas*.

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The main features of the interior monologue:

- lack of a chronological order
- lack of a linear sequence
- absence of a narrator (when he is present he is very neutral)
- frequency lack of punctuation

Not all modernist writers were so deeply concerned with the **working in the mind**, interested in depicting the working of the mind; the main writers interested in these phenomenon were James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, but we also have other very important writers, who dealt with different topics.

Some of them were analyzing **human relationship**; they can still be defined modernist, even though they actually mixed some elements that were more typical of the previous convention; these writers mixed realist conventions with modernist conventions; we can include among them Conrad, Lawrence and Forster. Each one dealt with realist conventions and modernist experimentation, and the main focus was the analysis of different perspectives in human relationships.

An other group of writers was more **socially and politically** committed. The most important representatives are Orwell and Huxley. They felt the importance of facing reality and they mixed some realist conventions with dystopian forms of experimentation.

## American panorama

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Also in the US WWI marked an epochal change; in particular it represented a sharp break both with the past and with those European influences and conventions that have dominated the American cultural scene. American writers and artists wanted to deal with modernism in their own way, without following those European influences that had been so dominant since colonial times.

After the great war in the US we have **great experimentation**; during the Roaring Twenties, with its economic growth and prosperity, there was the **Jazz age**; Jazz music

and dance style gained popularity in the us. America fell in love with Jazz music and dancing style, and also with the new forms of entertainment, such as Cinema and Radio.

This was a period of contradictions, because the '20s are also associated to the Prohibition era, which was based on the ban on the production and sale of Alcohol. In spite of this ban and laws, Night clubs proliferated during the twenties, american enjoyed joining parties and drinking cocktail, and some writers describe the glamour of life of jazz age also bringing to light the absence of values that was hidden behind this glamour.