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It starts in 1901, after Victoria came on the throne Edward VII from 1901 to 1910. The name of the period comes from the name of the monarch.

We generally refer to a period which goes on until the First World War, British Empire covered one fifth of the whole globe. Britain was of the richest nation in the world, British economy was challenged by Germany and the Usa.

King Edward VII proved to be a skilled diplomate, because in 1904 he made an agreement with France Entente Cordiale, it was important because it established that Britain could pursue its interests in Egypt, and France in Morocco.

Triple Entente: France, Britain and Russia, made to counterbalance the Triple Alliance: Germany, Austria and Italy.

Britain could count on Russia and France for the war.

Society

From the Victorian age there is no relevant change, we still have poverty.

1906

We have the political elections, liberals were took to power, they were internally divided into two groups: one who supported by the traditional liberal values, they didn't want the state to intervene in the social sphere, on the other side there were the new liberals which were, there was an important figure, called David Lloyd George, who was Chancellor of the Exchequer, the government department in charge of the country's finances.

New liberalism managed to make some significant social reforms, we have the foundation of the Welfare State.

After Edward we have George V, political changes: suffragettes. Women didn't have the right to vote, so they started to fight because they wanted to be equal to men. In Great Britain the leader is Emmeline Pankhurst, who found the movement Women's Social and Political Union (Suffragettes). Suffragettes comes from Suffrage. They started peacefully by writing kind letters to the parliament, then they started to fight, they chained themselves at fences, they broke windows... they were sent to prison. Many of them went on hunger strikes, they stop eating for protesting and eventually in 1918 women over 30 obtained the right to vote, in 1928 they obtain the suffrage of women over 21.

The assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand by a Serbian nationalist triggered the First World War.

The Uk declared war, this war was not going to be a short war and in order to win the war they needed soldiers and a stronger army. They accepted volunteers, but it took time to turn volunteers into soldiers, so they introduced conscription. Women replaced many men on many jobs and they were as good as men.

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Sigmund Freud= the unconscious is very important, the interpretation of Dreams. He stresses the importance of the unconscious, it is the most important between the two parts. The hidden forces operate somehow in an unconscious way, the theories were disturbing at that time. The human mind is composed by the id, the ego and the superego.

The id is the most primitive part, where we have our impulses. The ego is the part related to our rationality. The superego is subdivided into two parts: the moral conscience and the idealself.

The ego played a mediation role, between the impulses and the morality.

The unconscious is the most important part and dreams are the only means to access the unconscious and the method to use to investigate our mind is called free association of ideas.

Jung= Swiss philosopher, he developed the idea of the collective unconscious, it is a set of beliefs which we inherited from the past, it is such a cultural memory. Everyday objects have a meaning, they are symbols

Albert Einstein= his main theory is the relativity, important because it says that time and space are subjective dimension, this is a huge change. According to him also in time and space we can find a subjective component.

Henry Bergson= French philosopher who said that time can be divided into historical time and psychological time.

Inter-war years

It is a short period, characterised of important events. A lot of British dominations took their independence, such as Canada. India took a bit more, there was a moment of non-violent protest, led by Gandhi.

Also Ireland became independent: in 1918 after the elections the Sinn Fein Party made an independent parliament in Ireland. This party led a civil war which finally brought Ireland to independence in 1921 (birth of the Irish free state).

Only the region of Ulster remained under the Great Britain.

The war led to many financial problems, the only country with financial security was the US. Period: The roaring twenties.

Speculation= led in 1929 to the Wall Street crash, this produced a an economic digression all over the world. In this context of difficulty we have Adolf Hitler who took power and wanted the Germany to take back the territories.

The second World War broke out after the invasion of Polonia by Germany.

Britain and France declared war to Germany in order to stop the spread of the Nazist party.

It soon becomes a global war, after Japan bombed Pearl Harbour.

In 1941 Germany started to attack Britain by air and to bomb London, bringing a lot of civilians to death. In this years Hitler decided to dissolve the Molotov Ribbentrop Pact, between Germany and Russia. Germany decided to attack Russia and in 1922/1923 we have a turning point, in Russia we have the battle of Stalingrad, and they push back the German, first German defeat. Final German defeat= operation overlord. End of the war: Hiroshima and Nagasaki

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Imagism

Absolute freedom in the choice of subject matter, free with any topic, they used a clear, concise, harsh and precise language, their poems were very short because they focused on a single scene or image.

Their aim was reaching the truth of objects, precision and they rejected the convention of the past in stylistic sense and they rejected metrical regularity. These features were to become characteristic of modern poetry in general.

Symbolism

The main representatives are Thomas Ernest Eliot, American, and William Butler Yeats, Irish.

Symbolism was loosely organised, originated by a group of poets in the late 19 century in France, Baudelaire.

Main features: the main focus were symbols, they preferred to evoke rather than to state. The language is evocative, they preferred indirect sentences rather than direct statements. The poetry might be hermetic. Actually the symbolists wanted the reader to attribute his own meaning to their poetry.

Oxford poets

In the 30s another group of poet came out, the Oxford Poets, they all studied at Oxford, they were politically active on the left and their main themes were social justice and injustice, sense of community, socially and politically committed. They wanted to communicate with their fellow men, they were afraid that fascism and tirannism might spread all over Europe and so they wanted to point out a moral corse. The main representative is Auden.

The new Romantics

They rejected both the symbolism both the political commitment of the Oxford poets, they focused on emotions, love, birth, death, sex, that's why they were called New Romantics.

In the 18th we have the rise of the novel and the focus was representing society, novel as a mirror of society. The main theme was social mobility either upwards or downwards.

The novel had a linear structure with a chronological sequence of events and their plots were well-structured but with the Great War problems were born, how could modernists represent society after war? All the pillars on which society was based on totally collapsed. A crisis started and the period was very dark. They were forced by the circumstances to focus on the inner world. They were deeply influenced by Freud's theories about the unconscious.

Interest in the existence of different levels of consciousness and unconsciousness.

They were interested in the influence that past experiences could have on adult's behaviour. They rejected the narrative technique of the past, they were forced to do that. The technique they adopted to represent this constant flow of memories and feelings that takes place in the mind was the interior monologue. This was the stylistic translation of the psychic phenomena called stream of consciousness.

Mixture of temporal dimensions in our mind, they rejected linear plots in the novels, they focused on characters' inner thoughts and the working of the mind in order to represent this unspoken activity of the mind, they were forced to mix past, present and future. The easiest way to translate this psychic phenomenon in their novel was the adoption of the interior monologue.

There are different types of interior monologue: direct or indirect.

In the indirect interior monologue we still have the narrator, a guiding presence. There are some comments that introduce the characters' flow of thoughts. They rejected the use of the omniscient narrator.

In the direct interior monologue the characters' thoughts are directed to the reader without any filters.